MAXIMUMROCKNROLL

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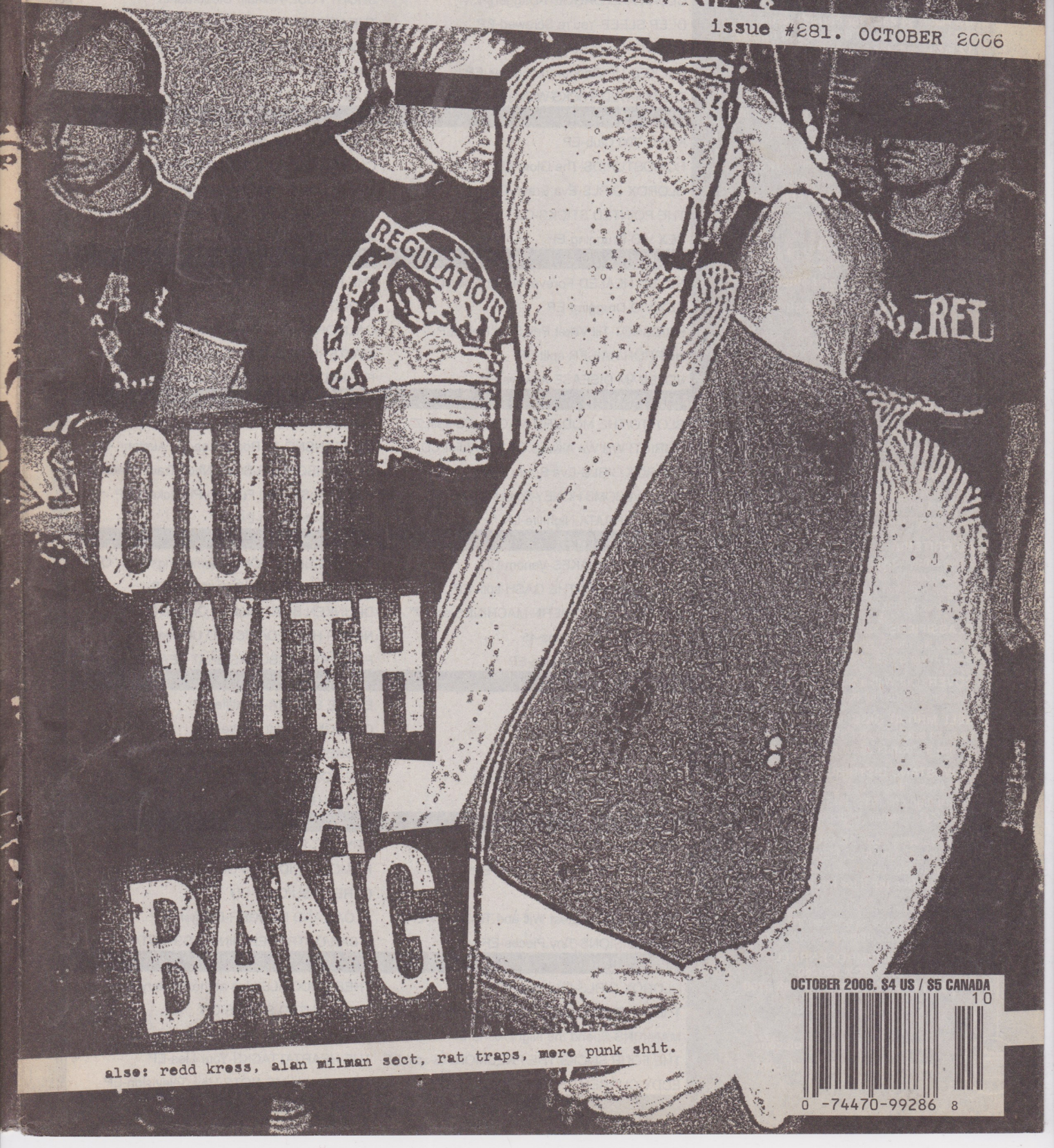

OUT WITH A BANG

also: redd kross, alan milman sect, rat traps, more punk shit.

OCTOBER 2006. $4 US / $5 CANADA
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MAXIMUMROCKNROLL

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- Everywhere else: $10 each (air). 12 issue sub for $110 (airmail only). 6 issue sub for $57 (airmail only).

Let us know which issue to start with!

BACK ISSUES AVAILABLE:
#148, 150-151, 153-154, 156 pts. 1 & 2, 160-163, 166, 172, 174-175, 179-181, 184-210, 214-227, 229-280
See page 4 for pricing and other info.

★★ AD RATES & SIZES!! ★★
1/6 page: (2.5" x 5") $30
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AD DEADLINE (with payment) is the 15th of the month. Issue comes out by the 2nd week of following month, and the cover date is the month after that.

AD FORMAT: Please send a TIFF or JPEG (300 dpi), EPS (w/ type outlined), or PDF (w/ fonts embedded)—or send on paper at the correct size.

AD CRITERIA:
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CLASSIFIEDS: $2 for a maximum of 40 words. No racist, sexist or fascist material. Send in via email, or typed if possible.

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TOP 10

For what it's worth, here's some of the MRR reviewers' current Top 10 (or so) things we've reviewed this month.

TIM BROOKS

- CLOAK AND DAGGER-Daggers-EP
- DEEP SLEEP-You're Screwed-EP
- SEX VID-Drugging-EP
- FUCKED UP-Dangerous Fumes-EP
- THE POINTED STICKS-Waiting for the Real Thing-CD
- SHORT FUSE-Remain Steadfast-LP
- THE HEARTATTACKS-Your Lies-EP
- NEVER HEALED-Forever Never Ends-LP
- CARBONAS-Lost Cause-EP
- CLOROX GIRLS-Eva Braun-EP

MITCH CARDWELL

- KORO-700 Club-EP
- HOMOSTUPIDS-The Glow-EP
- CLOROX GIRLS-Eva Braun-EP
- THE POINTED STICKS-CD
- SEX VID-Drugging-EP
- THE TOUCH-ME-NOTS-Hey, Television-EP
- CAREER SUICIDE-Anthology of Releases 2004-2005-CD
- ROYAL PAINS-Get Punched-EP
- THEE CRUCIALS-Live at the Mystery Spot-EP
- SUPERCHARGER-live

ROB COONS

- NEVER HEALED-Forever Never Ends-LP
- SEX VID-Drugging-EP
- KRIGSHOT-Till Vilket Pris Som Helst-LP
- HORRÖR/RAISER-split EP
- VOLEDAM DISEASE-Allways-EP
- THE POINTED STICKS-CD
- LSD-83/86-LP
- CALIFORNIA LOVE-Can't Waste Death-12"
- KVOTERINGEN-Vidrig Maskinell Framfart-EP
- FUCKED UP-Dangerous Fumes-EP

PAUL CURRAN

- BLOTTO/THE MODERN MACHINES-split 7"
- CHRIST!-Will We Always Be Blind Idiot CD
- CLOROX GIRLS-Eva Braun EP
- THE DIVEBOMB HONEY-Something's Going On EP
- ERASE ERRATA-Nightlife-LP
- ECSR/STRAIGHTJACKET NATION-split 45
- NOMEANSNO-All Roads Lead to Ausfahrt-CD
- PANIC DISORDER-Break Neck Train Wreck EP
- PISSCHRIST-Total Fucking Pisslickers-EP
- SEX VID-Drugging-EP

JONATHAN FLOYD

- AWESOME SNAKES-Venom-CD
- THE APE-SHITS/THE GASH-split EP
- BLOTTO/THE MODERN MACHINES-split 7"
- PETS-Sticky Situations-45
- CARBONAS-Lost Cause-EP
- THE DIVEBOMB HONEY-Something's Goin' On-EP
- THE HEARTATTACKS-Your Lies-EP
- DRUNKEN BOAT-Made in Oregon-CD
- NEVER HEALED/FUCKED UP-live
- FEELERS/CARBONAS/BEAT BEAT BEAT-live

LAYLA GIBBON

- KORO-700 Club-EP
- SEX VID-Drugging-EP
- CAREER SUICIDE-CD
- DEEP SLEEP-You're Screwed-EP
- CLOROX GIRLS-Eva Braun-EP
- ERASE ERRATA-Nightlife-LP
- CARBONAS-Lost Cause-EP
- FUCKED UP-Dangerous Fumes-EP
- THE POINTED STICKS-CD
- FUCKED UP/PELIGRO SOCIAL/MINDLESS MUTANT-live

CHRIS HUBBARD

- KVOTERINGEN-Vidrig Maskinell Framfart-EP
- DEEP SLEEP-You're Screwed-EP
- KORO-700 Club-EP
- POISON IDEA-Latest Will and Testament-LP
- CONVERSIONS-Tiny Pieces-EP
- DRY-ROT-Permission-EP
- HOMOSTUPIDS-The Glow-EP
- CAREER SUICIDE-CD
- CLOAK AND DAGGER-Daggers-EP
- K-BAR/OUTRAGED/MINDLESS MUTANT-live

KENNY KAOS

- CLOROX GIRLS-Eva Braun-EP
- THE DIVEBOMB HONEY-Something's Goin' On-EP
- MANIKINS-Spend the Night Alone-EP
- THE FOUR SLICKS/THE PNEUMONIAS-split EP
- EDDY CURRENT SUPPRESSION RING-split 45
- THEE CRUCIALS-Live at the Mystery Spot-EP
- THE POINTED STICKS-CD
- CARBONAS-Lost Cause-EP
- THE HEARTATTACKS-Your Lies-EP
- THE TOUCH-ME-NOTS-Hey, Television-EP

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TOP 10

Please send two copies of vinyl or CD-only releases to the address on the previous page. See Demos section for where to send tapes & CD-Rs.

CAROLYN KEDDY

- BATTLESHIP-To Give Not A Gift-EP
- HOMOSTUPIDS-The Glow-EP
- RED LIMO-Soulful Attack-EP
- THE HEARTATTACKS-Your Lies-EP
- ROYAL PAINS-Get Punched-EP
- THE APE-SHITS/THE GASH-split EP
- CARBONAS-Lost Cause-EP
- THE TOUCH-ME-NOTS-Hey, Television-EP
- CAREER SUICIDE-CD
- THE COME N' GO-2-CD/THE POINTED STICKS-CD

WILL KINSER

- POISON IDEA-Latest Will and Testament-LP
- IN NOMINE CHRISTI-Quo Vadis?-LP
- LSD-83/86-LP
- FESTA DESPERATO-Nov Babylon-7"
- KORO-700 Club-EP
- PISSCHRIST-Total Fucking Pisslickers-EP
- TODAY'S OVERDOSE-Insomnia-EP
- NEVER HEALED-Forever Never Ends-LP
- POLISIVALTIO-Fukk Your Discos-LP
- SKITKIDS/HJERTESTOP/TODAYS OVERDOSE-live

RAY LUJAN

- TWENTYFOUR HOUR HELL-CD
- THE DIVEBOMB HONEY-EP
- THE POINTED STICKS-CD
- BLOTTO/THE MODERN MACHINES-split 7"
- HAPPY HATE ME NOTS-The Good That's Been Done-CD
- LEFT-Jesus Loves the Left-CD
- KNOCK OUT KINGS-The Kid's Got Hearts!-CD
- SHOCK NAGASAKI-Late 4 Life/Classified Information-45
- ERASE ERRATA-LP/CLOROX GIRLS-EP
- THE ERGS!-live/AVENGERS-live

ALLAN MCNAUGHTON

- BATTLESHIP-To Give Not A Gift-EP
- CHRIST!-Will We Always Be Blind Idiots?-CD
- FUCKED UP-Dangerous Fumes-EP
- CLOROX GIRLS-Eva Braun-EP
- SEX VID-Drugging-EP
- CARBONAS-Lost Cause-EP
- PINK EYE-Worldwide Columbine-12"
- NEVER HEALED-LP / ERASE ERRATA-LP
- THE POINTED STICKS-Waiting for the Real Thing-CD
- FUCKED UP / NEVER HEALED-live

GOLNAR NIKPOUR

- KORO-700 Club-EP
- POISON IDEA-Latest Will and Testament-LP
- SEX VID-Drugging-EP
- KVOTERINGEN-Vidrig Maskinell Framfart-EP
- HOMOSTUPIDS-The Glow-EP
- CARBONAS-Lost Cause-EP
- KRIGSHOT-LP/DIOS HASTIO-EP
- ERASE ERRATA-Nightlife-LP
- CLOAK AND DAGGER-EP /SHORT FUSE-LP
- NEVER HEALED-LP/FUCKED UP-EP

BRUCE ROEHRS

- ALTERNATE ACTION/MARCHING ORDERS-split EP
- VOLEDAM DISEASE-Allways-EP
- V/A-All Punks Spending Drunk Night...-EP
- FUCKED UP-Dangerous Fumes-EP
- THINK I CARE-World Asylum-LP
- KVOTERINGEN-Vidrig Maskinell Framfart-EP
- TRIPLE THREAT-Into the Darkness-LP
- PINK EYE-Worldwide Columbine-12"
- SORE THUMBS/US BOMBS-live
- FUCKED UP/NEVER HEALED-live

RYAN WELLS

- LEFT-Jesus Loves the Left-CD
- SEX VID-Drugging-EP
- DEEP SLEEP-You're Screwed-EP
- CARBONAS-Lost Cause-EP
- NIKKI SUDDEN-Barroom Blues-EP
- EDDY CURRENT SUPPRESSION RING-split 45
- THE TOUCH-ME-NOTS-Hey, Television-EP
- BATTLESHIP-To Give Not A Gift-EP
- SOCRATES-Vultures, Hyenas, and Coyotes...-EP
- STAPLER-Metaphysical Haircut-CD

ZINE TOP TEN

- Beat Motor #5
- Celebrity Pets #3
- Incidental Afterthought #4/5
- Move Your Ass #13
- Razorcake #33
- Scam #5-1/2
- Slub and Lettuce #87
- Spare Change #18
- Toten Vaih Toehto #198
- Underworld Crawl #4

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A WHOLE CRAPLOAD OF MRR BACK ISSUES...

#150/Nov '95. NY Loose, Snap-Her, Sick Boys, Splatterheads, Pipe, Pregnant Man, Final Conflict, Rawness, Stink, Goblins, Smellie Fingers.

#153/Feb '96. Snort, Hatchetface, Little Ugly Girls, ADZ, Oxymoron, NOTA, Stun Guns, Surfin' Turnips, Gutfiddle, Karen Monster, Dimestore Haloes.

#154/Mar '96. Motards, Subincision, Stisism, Donnas, Stallions, Count Backwards.

#156 pt 1/May '96. Public Toys, Crunch, Peter & The Test Tube Babies, Nails Of Hawaiian, Splash 4, Yawp!, Lifetime, Sickoids.

#156 pt 2/May '96. Australian Special: Beanflipper, Melancholy, Blitz Babiez, Crank, SubRosa, Mindsnare, TMT, H-Block, B-Sides, Fallout, Frenzal Rhomb, Lawnsmell, One Inch Punch, Chickenshit, No Deal.

#160/Sept '96. Automatics, Boycot, Toast, Morning Shakes, Mormons, John Q. Public, Sex Offenders, Ballgagger, Business, Apocalypse Babys, Good Riddance.

#161/Oct '96. Jet Bumpers, Steel Miners, Divisia, Lopo Drido, Red #9, Nothing Cool, Sink, Sires, Newtown Grunts.

#162/Nov '96. Phantom Surfers, Candy Snatchers, the Stain, National Guard, Torches To Rome, Restos Fosiles, Two Bo's Maniacs, Snuka, Redemtion 87, Torture Kitty.

#163/Dec '96. Last Sons of Krypton, Prostitutes, Wig Hat, Boys, Let It Rock, Enemy Soil, Vulcaneers, Half Empty, Zeros, Deadcats, Teen Idles.

#166/Mar '97. Walking Abortions, Hickey, '77 Spreads, Sanity Assassins, Cards In Spokes, Joey Tampon & The Toxic Shocks, Adjective Noun, Suicide King, Lenguas Armadas, Trauma, De Crew.

#175/Dec '97. One Man Army, Those Unknown, Boiling Man, Piao Chong, Exploding Crustaceans, Last Year's Youth, Heartdrops, Dirty Burds, Dimestore Haloes.

#179/April '98. Boy Sets Fire, Tres Kids, Idyls, Spat & The Guttersnipes, The Posers, Explosive Kate, Douche Flag.

#180/May '98. Reinforce, Discontent, TV Killers, Slack Action, Eyeliners, Mademoiselle, MK Ultraviolence, Haulin' Ass, 97a, Infiltrators, Jack Saints, Stray Bullets.

#181/June '98. Grapefruit, Druggies, DDI, Bonecrusher, Normals, All Bets Off, Stiletto Boys, Summerjack, Cell Block 5.

#184/Sept '98. Absentees, Devoid of Faith, UXA, Umlaut, Four Letter Word, Streetwalkin' Cheetahs, Ricanstruction, Libertine, Indecision, Snarkout Boys.

#185/Oct '98. Traitors, Wimpy Dicks, Armed & Hammered, Dylan McKays, NME, Tezacrifco, Worm, Roswells, Raxola, Beatnik Termites.

#186/Nov '98. Registrators, August Spies, Marilyn's Vitamins, Chinese Love Beads.

#187/Dec '98. Real Kids, Sawn Off, Cretins, Spider Cunts, Heroines, 3rd Party, No Class.

#188/Jan '99. Stitches, Neighbors, Mansfields, Real Swinger, Marauders, Mark Bruback, Mars Moles, DOA.

#189/Feb '99. Monster X, Peter & the Test Tube Babies, Steam Pig, Maurauders, Yakuza, Dead Beat, Halfways, Hot Rod Honeys, DeRita Sisters.

#190/Mar '99. John Holstrom, Powerhouse, Brezhnev, Slappy, Black Pumpkin, Smartbomb ca, Wanda Chrome, Long Gones, Smogtown, Halfways, Tilt.

#191/April '99. Murder Suicide Pact, Kil Kare, Dudman, Super Hi-Fives, Better Than Elvis DJs, Pet Peeves, Loose Ends, Slingshot Episode.

#192/May '99. Los Crudos, Burning Kitchen, Henry Fiat's Open Sore, Polythene, Kangaroo Recs.

#193/June '99. Munster Recs, DS-13, Safety Pins, Pussycats, Piolines, False Alarm, Darlington, Bad Stain, Bodies, Houseboy, Mullets.

#194/July '99. Deathreat, Last Match, God Hates Computers, Fokkewolf, Flesh Eating Creeps, Aside, Hoppin' Mad, Kid Dynamite, Thee Outcasts.

#195/Aug '99. Moral Crux, RC5, Have Nots, Ill Tempered, Dysentery, Greg Higgins, Revlons, Larry & the Gonowheres.

#196/Sept '99. Hopscotch, Catharsis, Orchid, The Pricks, Grissle, Product X, Reaching Forward, Emerge, Third Degree, "Epicenter Zone '90-'99".

#197/Oct '99. Reducers SF, Lower Class Brats, Reactor 7, TheGodsHateKansas, Futuro Incierto, Showcase Showdown, Waifle, Flat Earth Recs.

#198/Nov '99. Hail Mary, Pressure Point, Bump 'N Uglies, The Victims, A//Political, Outlast

#199/Dec '99. Locust, Ratos de Porao, USV, Razlog Za, G-3, Swarm, WHN?, Mt. St. Helens, Black Cat Music, Enemy Soil.

#200/Jan '00. American Steel, Curse, Gee Vaucher, Hers Never Existed, Aaron Cometbus, Active distro, Toxic Narcotic, MRR catalogue #100-200.

#201/Feb '00. Beerzone, Towards An End, Daybreak, "Best Punk Singles of the '90s," the WTO riots in Seattle.

#202/March '00. KTMWQ, Real Estate Fraud, Strike Out, Broken Rekids, the Haggard, GC5, Gore Gore Girls, the Catheters.

#203/April '00. Spazz, Slang, *Slug & Lettuce* zine, *Suburban Voice* zine, As We Once Were, Red Angel Dragnet, Four Letter Words, Slampt Records, the Wednesdays, the Fuses.

#204/May '00. Cocksparrer, Talk Is Poison, Red Scare, Put Downs, Out Cold, Geraldine, Michael Knight, CBGaV, Pillage People.

#205/June '00. Punks With Kids special. Skudz, 50 Million, Legion, Wilbur Cobb, Coalition.

#206/July '00. Drunk, ESL, Ambition Mission, Lord High Fixers, Cripple Bastards, Dig Dug, Federation X, Amulet, Valentine Killers.

#207/Aug '00. Harum Scarum, Raw Power, Unseen, Pekinska Patka, Hudson Falcons, Dementia 13, Confine, Allergic to Whores.

#208/Sept '00. Le Shok, the Commies, the Chemo Kids, Day of Mourning, Affront, Diaspora, Whippersnapper, Hopeless/Sub City, Prank, Countdown to Oblivion

#209/Oct '00. Loose Lips, Godstomper, Peace of Mind, FYP, I Farm, Annalise, Cattle Decapitation, Riot/Clone.

#210/Nov '00. J Church, Profane Existence, Pezz, Pre-Teens, Templars, This Machine Kills, Subtonix, OB.

#214/Mar '01. Crispus Attucks, Fetish, Lifes Halt, Mr. Roboto, Dream Dates, Satan McNugget, Havoc, Briefs.

#215/April '01. No Means No, Vitamin X, Injections, Y, Dils, Last In Line, Don Austin, Deranged Records

#216/May '01. Propagandhi, Angelic Upstarts, Discordance Axis, Ruination, Photographer: Chris Boarts, Strap-Ons, Lynnards Innards

#217/June '01. Joey Ramone R.I.P., Tear It Up, Skitsystem, The Pattern, CrimethInc., Esperanza, The Chicago Blackout, Photographer: Ace

#218/July '01. Guyana Punchline, Les Sexareenos, The Devil Is Electric, Red Monkey, White Collar Crime, Forca Macabra, The Ataris, Suicide, The Mob

#221/Oct '01. The G8 Summit, Reflections, Soophie Nun Squad, Totalitär, True North, Wontons, Sin Dios, Bottles & Skulls, Scarred For Life, Flowers in the Dustbin, Remains of the Day, Ritchie Whites, B'67.

#222/Nov '01. Dios Hastio, Tragedy, Four Letter Word, *Salad Days* author Charles Romalotti, Very Metal, Maurice's Little Bastards, the Rotters, MDC Brazilian tour diary, the Cravats, JR Ewing, Dutch scene report, extended news section, "Globalization Rhetoric & Reality,"

#223/Dec '01. "US Policy in the Middle East," "Revisiting 1948," Manifesto Jukebox, Good Riddance, Pokers, Viimenen Kolonna, Bluebloods, Vitamin X tour diary, Flakes, Pg. 99, the Mob, 7 Days of Samsara.

#224/Jan '02. "Legislation Since Sept. 11, Rendencion 9.11, Metro Youth, Severed Head of State, Piranhas, Paraf, Backstabbers, Inc, An Albatross, Citizen Fish Tour, SPAM Records, the Virus, Action Time.

#225/Feb '02. Lengua Armada, Breaker Breaker, 3 Yrs. Down, Scrotum Grinder, Turun Tauti, Flux Of Pink Indians, Holding On, Pauki, 86'd, See You In Hell, Red Light Sting, Nazis From Mars, Scare Tactic.

#226/Mar '02. Queer punk special issue. Vaseline, Quails, Skinjobs, Italian queer punk report, Vaginal Davis, Feelings on a Grid, Sissies, Scott Free, Dumba, Columns.

#227/Apr '02. Bellrays, Rhinos, Wasted, Kristofer Pasanen, Business, Assert, DS 13 tour report, Life Set Struggle, Iowaska, Zounds.

#229/June '02. Countdown To Putsch, The Awakening, Dave Hill Distribution, Holier Than Thou, Kill Devil Hills, Sound Of Failure, E.T.A., Nubs, Les Baton Rouge, New Disorder Records, Career Suicide, Swellbellys, The Sinyx.

#230/July '02. Bitchin', Redencion 911, Phantom Limbs, Secretions, Holy Molar, Sharp Knife, Mighty John Waynes, A Global Threat, Groovie Ghoulies, Reproach, Annie Anxiety.

#231/Aug '02. Epoxies, Puppy Vs. Dyslexia, Koro, Blocko, Amdi Petersen's Armé, Piss & Vinegar Zine, Schizophrenic Records, Toys That Kill, Give Us Barabbas, Dirt.

#232/Sept '02. "No Future" article, Lost, Fartz, Sell Outs, Razors Edge, Stakeout, Dillinger Four, All or Nothing HC, Fleshies, Bridge Nine Records, Akashic Books, Liberty.

#233/Oct '02. "All Ages" article, Scholastic Deth, Runnamucks, Sinners & Saints, Panic, Gasolheads, Jewws, Futures, Michael Landon's Commandos, Storm the Tower, Against Me!, Balance of Terror, Class Assassins, Spazm 151.

#234/Nov '02. Snobs, What Happens Next? Brazilian tour, The Oath, Radio 4, Feederz, Charm City Suicides, Selfish, Riot 99, End On End, Peawees, Born/Dead.

#235/Dec '02. Anti-war Special Issue. Articles: "Reading for Democracy," "War on Iraq?" "Unfinished American Revolution," Resource Guide, "US Involvement in Iraq,""Axis of Empire." Long Island DIY Scene, What Happens Next? Brazilian tour part 2, Smalltown, Kylesa, Crash & Burn.

#236/Jan '03. Mr. California & State Police, Iron Lung, Riff Randells, Chainsaw, *Artcore*, Latterman, Travis Cut, Phenomenauts, Pretty Little Flower, X-Cretas.

#238/Mar '03. World Burns To Death, Chronics, Vilently Ill, Dystopia, Pilger, Exotic Fever, Brezhnev, R.A.M.B.O., Blown To Bits, Put To Shame, Deconditioned, This Bike Is A Pipe Bomb, Monsters.

#239/Apr '03. Romanian D-beat, Meconium Records, Amazombies, Abandoned Hearts Club, Mike V. & the Rats, Nicki Sicki, Bigamists, Bolivia article, Negatives, Kuolema, Defiance.

#240/May '03. I Quit, Apers, Headless Horsemen, Lesser of Two, Barse, Nightmare, Music Zine Roundtable, Exploding Hearts, Flesh Packs, Blacklist Brigade.

#241/June '03. Tyrades, Lumbergh, The Stand By Me, New Mexican Disaster Squad, Cut the Shit, Libertinagem, 17th Class, the Ends, He Who Corrupts, Deathbag, Cria Cuervos.

#242/July '03. Pensacola & San Francisco punk protest reports, John Wilkes Booze, Anfo, Bob Suren, Migra Violenta, Jackson 8, *Snakepit* zine , Krigshot, the Rites, Deadfall.

#243/Aug '03. "Media Alliance and the FCC," Striking Distance, Malcontents, Invisible City, Books Lie, Charm City Art Space, Hopeless Dregs of Humanity, I Shot Cyrus, Sunday Morning Einsteins, What the Kids Want, Onion Flavored Rings.

#244/Sept '03. None More Black, Deadline, Rai Ko Ris, Boxed In, Exploding Hearts, Raving Mojos, Blackout Terror, Morticia's Lovers, Thee Fine Lines, *Trust* zine.

#245/Oct '03. No Time Left, Riistetyt, Intense Youth, The Gimmies, Ass End Offend, Artimus Pyle, La Fraction, Kung Fu Rick, The Horror.

#246/Nov '03. Punk & Resistance in Israel, Letters from Palestine, No Choice, FM Knives, Bury the Living, Marked Men, The Dirty Burds, Provoked.

#247/Dec '03. DSB, The Boils, Popular Shapes, Phoenix Foundation, Bathtub Shitter, Meet the Virus, Cropknox, "Punk Babies on Tour" Article.

#248/Jan '04. Discharge, Superhelicopter, Jed Whitey, Black Friday '29, Find Him And Kill Him, The Lids, Impratical Cockpit, Face Up To It, History Of Maximum Rocknroll Radio.

#249/Feb '04. From Ashes Rise, Hagar the Womb, This Is My Fist, Skip Jensen, Gride, Katy Otto/Mike Taylor Dialogue, John Yates, Pointing Finger.

#250/Mar '04. Best Records of 2003, Miami FTAA protests, Clorox Girls, FIYA, "La Villita: Chicago Pilsen Scene," Terminus Victor, Restarts, Damage Done, Knights of New Crusade.

#251/April '04. The Fuse!, Väkivaltaa, Modern Machines, Microcosm, Migra Violenta Euro tour diary, Allegiance, Neurotic Swingers, Xavier Lepaige Photos, Le Scrawl,Vrah.

#252/May '04. Fucked Up, Firestarter, Inepsy, Laukaus, Great Clearing Off, Radio Reelers, Extreme Noise Records, 46 Short, The State, John The Baker, Free Verse, Chrystaei Branchaw photos.

#253/June '04. Sweet J.A.P., Gorilla Angreb, Võetsek, Minority Blues Band, Scruvy Dogs, Molotov Cocktail, Kidnappers, Schifosi, King Ly Chee, YDI.

#254/July '04. No Hope For The Kids, Dropdead, Diskords, Breakfast, Asschapel, I Excuse, Strung Up, To Hell & Back, Four Eyes, Lamant, Gammits MW, scene reports from Portland, Boston and Germany.

#255/Aug '04. "Punk's Not Dead, Reagan Is" Special Issue. Leatherface, Get It Away, The Hatepinks, Keen Monkey Work, New York City, South Dakota, Czech Republic, Philippines, Russia.

#256/Sep '04. The Observers, Witchhunt, Annihilation Time, Zann, Eskapo, FxPxO, Haymarket Riot, Fourth Rotor, Les Georges Lenigrad, Texas scene, Newfoundland, Indiana, England.

#257/Oct '04 The Election Issue, Jesse Townley, Matt Gonzalez, Rattus, Fighting Dogs, Hero Dishonest, Kickz, The Boss Martians, Reactionary Three, Slovakia, Australia, South Wales, South East Asia.

#258/Nov '04. Career Suicide, Cathy Wilkerson of the Weather Underground, No Fucker, The Repos, Dominatrix, Ashtray, Deadstop, Midnight Creeps, Michale Graves, The Diffs, The Shemps, Abi Yo Yo's.

#259/Dec '04. Bad Business, Penelope Houston, Rambo, AI, Ass, I Attack, The Krunchies, A-Lines, Insurgence Records, The Hates, Accidents, Massgrav, The Critics, Merciless Game, SF Hotel Workers Strike, photos from Japan, SoCal & the Bay Area.

#260/Jan '05. Technocracy, The Total End, Only Crime, True North, Partisans, For The Worst, Dick Spikie, Straight to Hell, Black Cross, Action, Ergs, Rusty Nails, Queer Activism in London, Greg Shaw tribute, John Peel tribute, "Andrew" "Stig" Sewell tribute, Beijing punk photos.

#261/Feb '05. Year End Top Tens, Riistetyt, Lost Cherrees, Complete Control, Cheap Sex, Gasoline Please, Beerzone, Greyskull, MOTO, Water Into Beer Fanzine, Swe-Punk scumpit, Japan punk photos, Bay Area punk photos, Texas, Russia, and Malaysia scene reports.

#262/March '05. Kärnvapen Attack, Neo Boys, Catholic Boys, Dead Moon, Wreckage, Frantix, Armitage Shanks, Wendy Kroys, To What End?, Cell Block 5, Bent Outta Shape, Ah-Nah Tron, Slovakia, Indonesia, and Illinois scenes.

#263/April '05. All Crusties Spending Loud Night 2004, Bombenalarm, Battleship, APA, The Black Lips, Words That Burn, Flamingo 50, The Low Budgets, Mellakka, I Object, Antisect, Bay Area scene report, South Coast UK scene report.

#264/May '05. Crime, Love Songs, Bruce Banner, Intent, The Holy Mountain, Have Heart, The Bill Bondsmen, The Real Losers, archive photos, Bay Area scene photos, Taiwan and Rochester scene reports.

#265/June '05. Endless Nightmare, Hard Skin, Kolokol, Amebix, Transistor Transistor, The Safes, The Detonators, Finland scene report, France scene report, SoCal scene report.

#266/July '05. The Carbonas, MDC, Destrux, Unkind, Hiretsukan, Giant Haystacks, Ohuzaru, Teenage Harlets, Michigan scene report, San Diego scene report, Eugene, OR scene report, photos.

#267/August '05. Knugen Faller, Sleeper Cell, Motorama, Gulcher Records history, Army of Jesus, The Slicks, Thee Merry Widows, Rotten Sound, The Faction (UK), Czech scene report, New Zealand scene report.

#268/September '05. Signal Lost, Gulcher Records history part two, Teenage Bottlerocket, Mattilda (aka Matt Bernstein Sycamore), The Spectacle, Bang Sugar Bang, Chumbawamba, Reason of Insanity, Forward To Death, Flyer art, Florida Scene Report, Bay Area scene report, photos.

#269/October '05. Hammer, Desastre, Human Eye, Les Bellas, Gasmask Terror, Randy "Biscuit" Turner tribute, Stalag 17 (UK), Stepbrothers, Retching Red, Weaving the Deathbag, Gather, Chicago and SoCal scene reports.

#270/November '05. Clorox Girls European Tour, Czolgosz, Regulations, Time Flys, Taxi, No More Lies, Oil!, Paddy Costello of the Dillinger Four, Smartpils, Revenge of Mongoloid zine, Pisschrist, Scene reports: Puerto Rico, UK, Russia.

#271/December '05. Besthöven, Abductee SD, Tractor Sex Fatality, George Harrison, Deathtoll, Photos by icki, Ice & The Iced, the Ulcers, Chimps Eat Bananas, Deranged / Criminal IQ / Kick'n'Punch Records. Scene reports: Iowa, Maine, Illinois.

#272/January '06. Conga Fury, Let's Grow, Frustration, Bastardass, Icons of Filth, Burial, Hrydjuverk, Cranked Up!, Urrke T & the Midlife Crisis, Tropezio, *Baboon of Sickness* zine. Scene reports: Austin, France, Michigan, Larry Wolfley photos.

#273/February '06. Fuses, Endstand, Out Cold, Pedestrians, Acts of Sedition, BadEatingHabits, Western Addiction, Jesus Fucking Christ, Toxic Waste, Punk photo spread, St. Louis, USA & Brighton, UK scene reports.

#274/March '06. Best of 2005, Formaldehyde Junkies, Brutal Knights, Kansan Uutiset, Hatred Surge, A-Heads, Manikin, Upinatem, Hips, Boston scene report, Punk photo spread.

#275/April '06. History of ABC No Rio (Part One), Ringers, Missbrukarna, '90s garage punk scumpit, Anatomi-71, After the Bombs, Rubella Ballet, RIP Pig Champion, Ricky Adam interview and photographs, Sean McGhee, Hard Skin US tour diary.

#276/May '06. "Is Business Killing Punk Rock?" business survey (Part One), History of ABC No Rio (Part Two), Vitamin X Asian Pacific tour diary, Soviet Valves Suburban Death Machine, Frustrations, George Hurchalla, Scene reports: Czech Republic and Greece.

#277/June '06. "Is Business Killing Punk Rock?" business survey (Part Two), Imperial Leather, Boom Boom Kid, Vitamin X Asian Pacific Tour (part two), "How to Make It Big!" by the Phantom Surfers, Magrudergrind, Poland.

#278/July '06. Billy Childish, Death Token, The First Step, Ramsey Kanaan of AK Press, Headache City, Deconditioned, Under Pressure, Insuiciety, Instigators, Malaysia Scene, Bay Area Scene Pics.

#279/August '06. Mika Miko, The Fall, Cardiac Arrest Digger & the Pussycats, Massmord, Insect Warfare, The Astronauts, Canary Islands Photo Spread, Four Slicks, The Fallout, PAWNS, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, & Umeå, Sweden scenes.

#280/September '06. Hjerte Stop, Grupo Sub-1, Desperate Bicycles, Bill Daniel interview and photo spread, APF Brigade, Disconvenience, Southkore Fest photo spread, Rosenbombs, Up the Voltage, Euro photo spread, Svartenbrandt, Asheville, NC & world wide punk scene reports.

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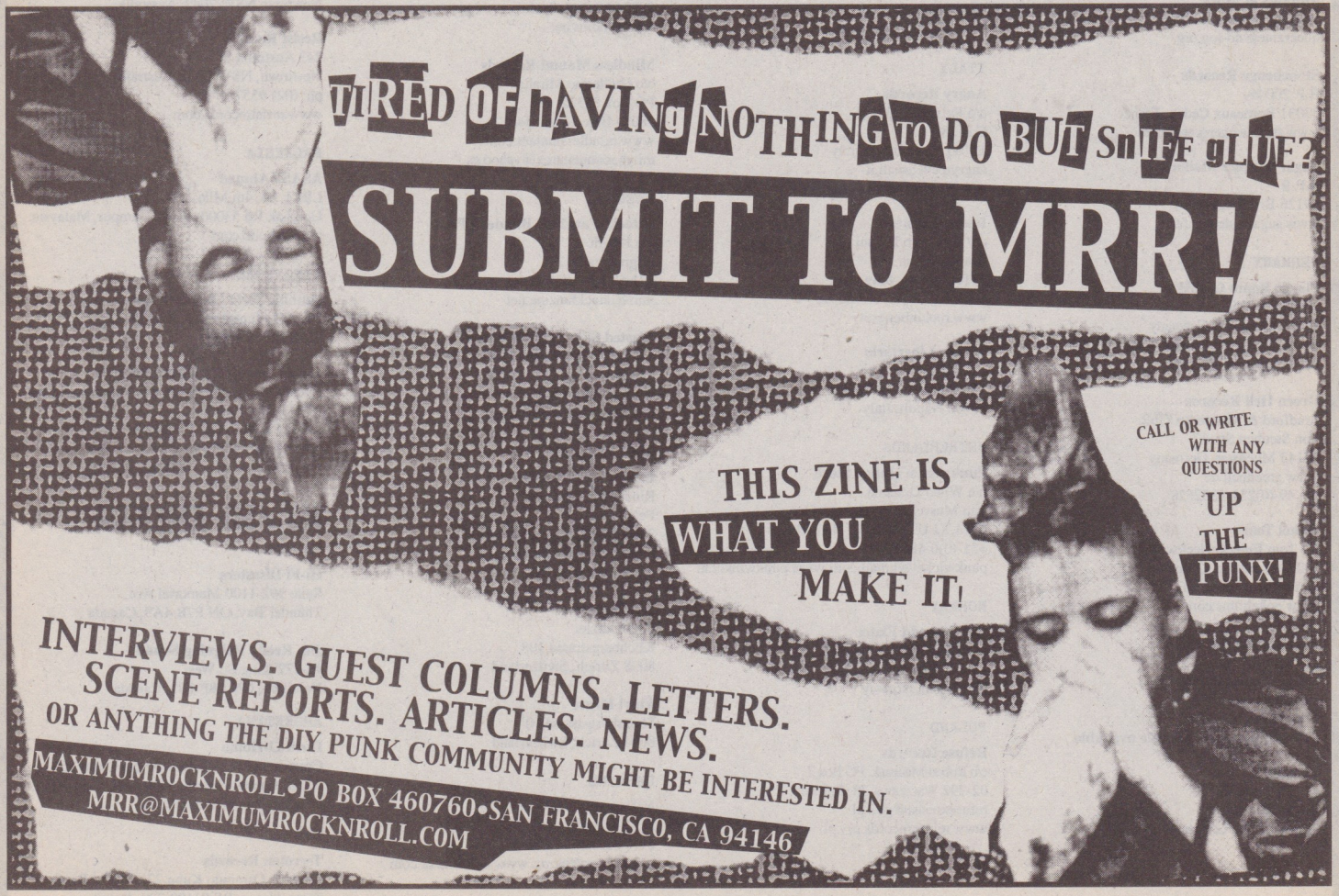

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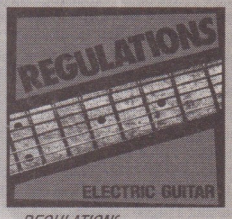

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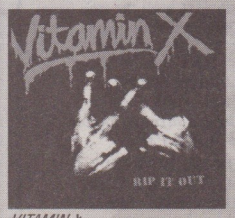

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MRR–

Over 26 years after first entering the building and 16 years after our first hardcore matinee, on June 29, 2006, ABC No Rio took ownership of the building at 156 Rivington Street from the City of New York. We have been home to radical arts and activism since our founding, and have been struggling to protect our space all the while. After years of eviction fights, and negotiations with the city, we've finally reached our goal of owning the building.

This past January was our 16th year of holding weekly all ages DIY punk and hardcore matinees. We've been able to keep what we're doing because of the support we've received from the punk scene across the globe.

Now that we own the building, we're beginning the long-awaited process of deciding what our space will look like once we renovate it. We are meeting with architects and the rest of the buildings collective to plan out our future. We are only limited in what we do by how much money we can raise. To date we've raised over $290,000, enough to begin and complete the first phase of construction. This is the first phase of a three-phase project, meaning we have a lot more work ahead of us.

Our plans include making our building a multi-use community arts center with darkroom, silk-screen printing facility, small press resource center, computer center, expanded space for art, music, performance, educational and community activities, and meeting and office space.

Our timetable for construction is yet to be determined, so we will keep everyone updated. But for now while we celebrate this victory, we're continuing the work we've been doing for 26 years.

The Hardcore/Punk Collective would like to thank everyone at *MRR* for their support over the years. We'd also like to thank everyone who has ever played at ABC, volunteered, done a benefit for us, supported us in any way, or even dropped by to say hi.

For more info on what we're up to, or how you can help us out, or how to get your band to play here visit: www.abcnorio.org

–The ABC No Rio Hardcore/Punk Collective

Dear MRR–

July 29th, 2006. Layla Gibbon is my favorite new columnist at *MRR*, and may possibly become my overall fave (sorry Georgie the Tabby, you *know* I love you, but I think she's punker than both of us combined!). Plus her *MRR* Radio #995 set kicked ass! Thanx for the sounds of Unit 3 and info on them and Mad Society in yer column! Anyway, my punctuation sucks, but I just wanted to share this all with you and check in with a letter. It's been a while. Plus I usually dont use punctuation because Im fucking lazy in a punktuatingly kinda way. Huh? Ok that's it. *Punk rock!!* Shouts out to Teenage Bottlerocket and Dead To Me! They *rule!*

In Sin always,

–SeanShame aka Pentagram Hands

myspace.com/pentagramhands (Yeah, yeah I know...)

Dear MRR–

Punks from Irkutsk, East Siberia, report:

"On Friday, August 4th, our friend Nastya died. She was an anarchist, environmentalist, antifascist, active participant in Food Not Bombs, bass player in the crust/hardcore band Vegativ, simply sympathetic person, and great friend."

Apparently, she was hit by a train. I wish to offer her friends and family sincerest condolences.

Best wishes,

–Szarapow

Dear Andy Shoup–

I just read your review of my zine *The Punk Pagan #5* in the new *MRR*, and while I never expect a good review, I'll admit I was rather taken aback by what you said and also by what you implied (i.e. that I was prejudiced against Arabs in general). I am one who will always admit to my mistakes and I was wrong to refer to them as "fucking Arabs"—it should have read "fucking Islamic extremists." I will not apologize, however, for the cartoon flipping the bird to those "Islamic fucks," just as I would also flip the bird to Orthodox (conservative) Jews, or conservative Christian extremists in this country. I addressed this in *Punk Pagan #6*, where I said I have nothing whatsoever against Arab kids who want to smoke pot and listen to rock and roll. I support those kids 100%. I just do not see where it is taking "a weird turn" for *The Punk Pagan* to come out against Islamic extremism just as I have come out against radical Christian extremism in the past.

You see Andy, I think that you are under the mistaken impression that the extreme radical Muslims are the "good guys" simply because they are against the dumb-ass policies of the United States. Well, I got news for ya Andy—in that whole conflict going on in the Middle East right now, there are no good guys, only extremely bad guys, whether they are Israelis, Americans, or Muslims. All three are sending their young to fight their stupid wars and die, and I say fuck all of them.

While *MRR* may not have a "unified stance or set of opinions per se" it is the stance of *The Punk Pagan* that religious extremism is bogus and completely fucked whether it is Muslim, Christian, or Jew. Marx was right when he declared it to be the "opiate of the masses"! It can either calm you down or rile you up. But, however, *The Punk Pagan* finds Islam to be especially distasteful—it is a "fake" religion built on and historically based on the subjugation and oppression of women, the old Imams selling the young a bill of goods that includes if you martyr yourself for the cause you get to fuck a bunch of virgins in heaven. It is, unequivocably, a bunch of fucking crap! These Imams are not good people, they are evil cowards—you do not see them blowing themselves up, do you? They are every bit as evil as Bush and the US government, just different. Oh, and Andy, that is exactly the sort of bullshit *The Punk Pagan* does not stand for. *The Punk Pagan* is anti-racist, anti-homophobic, anti-sexist, and anti-organized religion, and that is the stance that both my zine and I take and I'm not afraid to call 'em like I see 'em. The world would be a lot better place if we could just slip off these trappings of "Well, I'm this religion and you're that religion, so we don't get along." How fucking stupid is that?

LETTERS

Anyway, Andy, I did take your review to heart and I honestly did not mean to imply a hatred of all Arabs although I do hate practitioners of all radical extremist religions. I'll try to be more careful with my words—I hope I've explained myself and my views a little more reasonably with this letter. No hard feelings, okay? Hope you'll give *PP* another chance.

Maniac Mike
c/o *The Punk Pagan*
PO Box 282
Manville, RI 02838

P.S. I think it is a damn shame all of the havoc that US imperialism has wrought throughout the Middle East and perhaps that is one of the causes for the rise of radical extremist Islam. We've made our bed over there and now we have to sleep in it!

Hi!–

I'm writing to you because my address was printed incorrectly in the last issue (look for the Wargrave demo tape review). The correct address is: GIANBATTISTA WIEGNER, SPALENRING 139, 4055 BASEL, SWITZERLAND.

Thanx and take care!

Löve & equality,
–Gian

P.S. Always enjoy your zine, you're doing an awesome job!

What's up MRR–

I've got a couple of issues to rant about. First off, on June 30th, I was arrested while riding with the local Critical Mass here in Minneapolis. I don't know if this has been a problem in other cities recently, but it seems absurd to me. The entire ride went off without a hitch from the beginning. We started in Loring Park downtown, and back way through downtown, into South Minneapolis, through uptown, and back up Hennepin Ave into downtown. As we rode up Hennepin Ave, we came up to 7th Street where there's a new entertainment complex which has seen a couple of random shootings and murders in recent months, leading the police to send out more foot patrol cops.

As we crossed 7th, we blocked traffic and rode through a red light, as with all other red lights we came to. Next thing I know, there's what I thought was a security guard grabbing me by my arm, so I do what anyone would do and shook him off. I was riding pretty slow so I tried to speed up, but he ran after me and tore my bag off my shoulder, causing the strap to tangle in my pedals and stop me. I got off my bike and he proceeded to arrest me. Several people were taking pictures with cell-phones and digital cameras. The cop pushed me into the corner of a building and said, "You better hope they get enough pictures before there's any bruises, because as soon as I get you to jail, I'm going to beat the shit out of you." After that I shut up since he was about to pepper spray me. They confiscated my bike (which incidentally enough has a This Bike is a Pipe Bomb sticker on it) and bag and took me to jail.

A girl by the name of Jamie Jones was also arrested and taken to jail for asking why I was being arrested. We both went to jail for about six hours until our bails were paid. Luckily for me, I was able to explain to the cops the significance of the Pipe Bomb sticker and my bike was spared. All of Jamie's charges were eventually dropped, but mine are all pending. On my arraignment, I was offered a plea bargain to plea guilty on the charge of fleeing an officer on foot, then they would give me a one-year continuance with no same or similar offenses and they would drop the disorderly conduct and obstructing traffic charges and pay $100 fine or do eight hours community service.

I was pretty pissed off so I pled not guilty on all charges. Since then, I've had to hire a lawyer for $1500, which I cannot afford. I have a court date on August 4th and hopefully will get a better deal since I now have a lawyer. I don't know if things like this happen in other cities, but if anyone out there has had anything similar happen, please get in touch and tell me any stories of similar instances and let me know what happened. I'd love to hear from you.

Second, what's with people booking shows and not posting fliers? There have been several shows in the past year that are pretty big and have gone with little or no fliers. Some that come to mind are Plan-It-X Fest last summer, Capitalist Casualties last month, and the amazing solo singer, Madeline. If you book a show, please please please flier for it. I'm sure the band's performers will appreciate the higher turn-out. If you book a show and don't want tons of people at your house or space, you're not doing anyone a favor. Don't book shows at your spot if you don't want lots of people showing up. Even shows at Maln (highly illegal spot next to a local police station, RIP) had a calendar at Extreme Noise with all of the shows listed on it. Remember, even if it is posted on the internet, not everyone has access to the net and won't know without a flier at a record or book store.

Well, I'm done. As I said, if anyone wants to share similar situations with Critical Mass, please get in touch. I don't have a computer or internet access, so you'll have to send it via old style mail. I'd love to hear from you. Stay active and stay strong.

–Brian Dooley
906 S. 7th St, Apt 508
Minneapolis, MN 55415

Hey MRR and readers–

Could you please print the following thing in your letter section? A few months ago you reviewed issue #7 of my zine *Ratcharge*, a split with New Zealand zine *Shit For Brains*. When I got back in France I received two letters from people in the US who sent me one or two dollars and wanted the zine, which was great, but the thing is I got back to New Zealand shortly after that, didn't have the time to send the zine to them, and forgot the addresses of these people. So I hope the two of them will read this letter and send me an email at this address, xxgluestickxxbrigadexx at yahoo.fr, so I can send them their zines. I'm sorry and hate to be sloppy like that with zines orders, so please if you're the people that sent me these letters, write to me and Ill send the zines really fast this time!!!

Thanks for your help and keep up the good work.
–Alex

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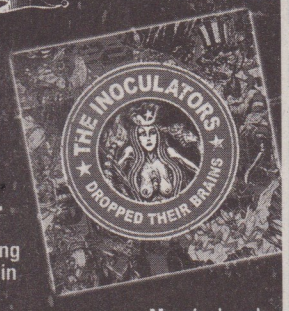

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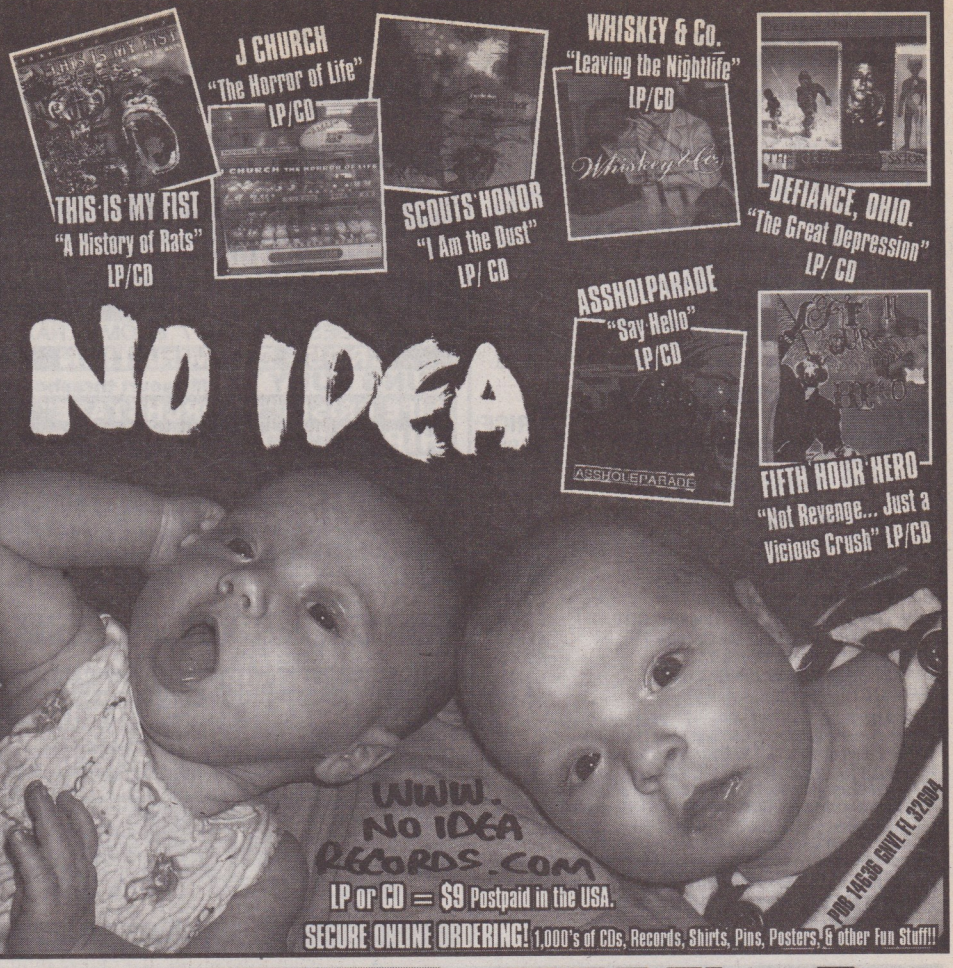

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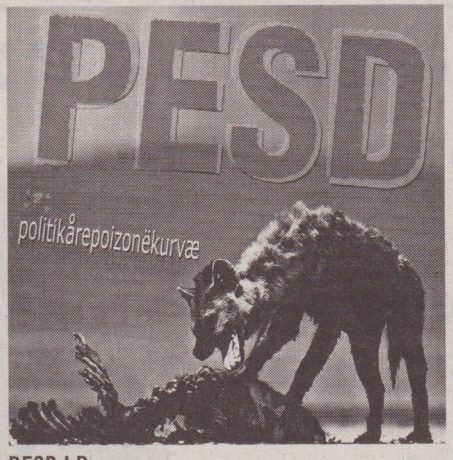

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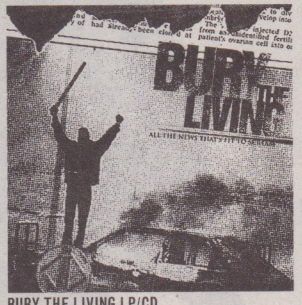

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COLUMNS

This week has been titled "Out of the Bunker, Onto the Bike" or "The Bro-dyssey Continues," depending on who you talk to. The dreamy Scott Moore was in town, as was Paul Henry, so not only did Limp Wrist have an intense writing sesh for their next triple LP, but the pit at the five zillion Fucked Up shows that also occured was taken to the next level by their delectable presence. Good times! The animals also were at once saved and oppressed—from the San Diego chapter of the Vegan Reich descending on my house militia-style with a righteous vegan brunch, to free day at the zoo with the wolfpack, to the aforementioned Scott Moore feeding a strange vole-like creature carrots out of his mouth... Totes ridic. This week in Bay Area shows also included Peligro Social, the Clorox Girls, many Look Back and Laugh side projects, and the second Club Sandwich event—more on that later tho.

I have been formulating an article on growing old and staying punk, and then suddenly the deadline for getting this thing in looms up and my well-crafted article is, uh, still in the "draft" stage, so I just write about random things instead. I am the champion of digression. Anyway, before I launch into the Homer-esque retelling of my Bro-dyssey-styled week, I got this awesome correspondence from Lance Hahn in regards to my first column, specifically the thing I wrote about Unit 3 + Venus. I am such a nerd, and I love it when I get fill in the blank details about random obscure bands I am obsessed with... Like one time my friend Scott found this single in the dollar bin at Amoeba by a band called Ama-Dots; it looked punk, plus Ohio in the early '80s? Definitely worth checking out... We played it and it totally blew our brains out, like a better Bush Tetras, informed by the ladies of early Rough Trade but not as earnest dead pan politico, kind of arch and mocking, less direct, more fucked up even... So I had to procure my own copy—this was in the days before Myspace Crust (which I only just found out about—mind is blown!), meaning less viper-like record nerdage on the net, a mystical time when bargains were still possible... Anyway, I got the single on eBay for three bucks. I think it costs a lot more now. The seller sent it to me with a huge package of show fliers, radio playlists... Just the rad ephemera of punk that tends to disappear, but that really puts bands and scenes into context. Ama-dots, as far as I remember, played shows with both Bad Brains *and* the Contortions—so fucking rad!! That is the best thing about having access to the huge pile of zines that Steve Subterranean donated to the *MRR* archive—just to have random snotty kid opinions on bands that are considered part of the canon nowadays, to read about bands and shows that are legendary now but were just what was happening in that juncture in time for whomever wrote the article... Also, see the Italian punk zine *TVOR* reprint that just came out for a similar idea.

I feel like my favorite contradiction in punk is its permanent yet disposable nature, how some things get written in stone and other things totally evaporate; what's the factor that makes things that way? I mean there are obvious ones like access to resources, like if you are a punk in close proximity to Hollywood you get to be in *The Decline of Western Civ*, whereas if you are a punk in a random town in Michigan you get Poison Idea arranging an entire tour around getting a hold of your 7" of which only 200 made it into circulation—i.e., The Fix. Also I had this rad conversation with someone who helped put together that Jim Jocoy book *We're Desperate* that came out a few years back with unnamed pictures of punks from LA and NY, and how initially they were going to get everyone's name onto their image, but then they decided it would be radder to have everyone in there without distinctions between the audience and the band members/more notorious scenesters. I think the names are in the back of the book, but I think it's so cool that it takes away the legend's status and just puts them in the context of the kids that helped create the movement/scene in one big lineup.

Anyway, on to Lance Hahn—note the lame introduction of a dreaded stage mother into my idealistic notion of Unit 3 plus Venus, which further demonstrates how punk in Hollywood is always going to be weird:

"When I was a kid growing up in Hawaii there was one punk club called 3Ds. It was in Waikiki and was for tourists and college kids. They were pretty fucked but would sometimes bring okay bands over. They would operate like a '70s club where a band would come over and play a residency for a week or so. They brought over Agent Orange and the Circle Jerks. It was okay. They were mostly into new wave. At the height of their popularity, they also brought over Unit 3 w/ Venus. They actually were sorta popular in the underground very briefly for two reasons. First of all, I think they were on one of the Rodney on the ROQ compilations. Those records were the BIGGEST source for kids not in the know to find out about new bands. It's funny to think that everyone was so into those comps. But that's how a lot of people heard Black Flag, the Minutemen, and the Adolescents for the first time. Also, they appeared on New Wave Theater, which was a horrible cable access type show out of LA. It would play late at night and in the era before MTV and it was where a lot of punks got to see bands for the first time. In both cases they played the song "I Like Boys" and it was sort of a hit.

"But the punks hated them. First of all, they were a fake band. The actual band was her mom and dad and they forced her to sing. It was sort of like a new wave Bonnet-Ramsey situation. I wanna say her mom was something like a sleazy Hollywood agent. The hardcore punks in Hawaii made fun of them and Venus started crying. It was actually kind of mean.

"The funny thing about her and the kid from Mad Parade is that they were just kids. The used to pretend to be boyfriend and girlfriend, whatever that means. Even though it was totally uncool at the time, the kid from Mad Parade got REALLY into the second Adam and the Ants record and would show up at gigs dressed like an Indian. It was very cute.

"Anyway, just wanted to make a note as it's pretty rare when you get to communicate with anyone about something like Unit 3 w/ Venus (who I did like, incidentally)..."

I think Hubbard already said something about this in his column in the last issue with the rad Hjertestop/Guy-Smiley-from-the-Muppets-style cover, but Lance is having some lame medical problems, so you and yr friends should form a Unit 3/Mad Society-style band and do a benefit for him. American health care is a shitsystem; it's so weird living in a country where health care is considered a privilege for the wealthy and not a right for all... I think you can read about it here: http://myspace.com/lancehahn. Also if you want to listen to Unit 3 or Mad Society, both me and Golnar have played them on various *MRR* radio shows, so I am sure if you go to the *MRR* website and look in the archive section, you can download a show and skate to it or somethin'?

What else? Not much! I did/used to do a zine called *Chimps* when I lived in England and I am trying to locate some back issues, so if you have any, specifically issues 1-5 and 7, please send them to me via *MRR* and I will xerox and mail

them back. Unless you want them banished from yr life.

Club Sandwich is a group of concerned San Francisco residents who are attempting to set up an all-ages show space that you do not have to pay to play in order to have a show, like at Balazo, or get countless noise complaints, as at ATA. We are going to be having benefits and shows under that banner as well as attempting to figure out the politics of making it part of the community and not just for punk shows—i.e., we are talking to the Man in the form of various local politicians. If you want to get involved, I believe someone set up this page for it: www.myspace.com/clubsandwich

You can write me here: layla.gibbon @gmail.com—but I am REALLY LAME at writing people back. Just a warning.

Summer Jams:
1: Learning that Poison Idea planned a tour around Pig Champion getting the The Fix 7" 2: Crucial abbreves 3: Going tubing, free day at the zoo, Fucked Up live, Clorox Girls live, Peligro Social live. Christy in town... Productive Summer '06 all in one week. 4: Chloe Puke's Pizza Cab idea 5: Can I say the proper reissue of the Koro 7" Yes I can. 6: The Eyes TAQN 7" 7: Mika Miko LP. *Dude*. So good, total eternal top ten material. 8: Chaos–"Get Out of My Pocket" 9: Nervous Students and Hot Tub shows upcoming. 10: Having to pick between a Look Back and Laugh, Mindless Mutant, and Young Offenders show *or* a Carbonas show. Yay Areaaaaaaaaa...

I'm writing this the day after going to a show with Retching Red and two local bands, Mouth Sewn Shut and Unholy Trinity, at the now-revived basement space the Cuntree Club, and who's to know if it won't be gone by the time this column is printed. The ever-shifting world of Boston DIY. Venues coming and going, same as it's always been. Regeneration Records, a record store/tattoo parlor that I've mentioned in this space before, had to stop doing shows after noise complaints from a Look Back and Laugh/Army of Jesus show there in late June. They're hoping to start shows again in September, once things get straightened out with the city. In the meantime, Ross, the co-owner of the store, rented out a practice space near Fenway Park, an increasingly gentrified part of Boston—expensive condos are being built nearby and Fenway itself has turned into an overpriced theme park. Us *real* fans can't get tickets unless we have "connections," want to pay scalpers (aka ticket agencies), or want to sit in the nosebleed seats or behind a fucking pole where we can't see the pitcher's mound. *Harrumph*. Getting back to the space, dubbed Anything Goes, it was a small room with concrete walls. They did shows there for a few weeks, including the Runnamucks and the Brutal Knights. It wasn't an ideal solution, since it was a small space and could realistically only hold 30-40 people. In any case, earlier this week, it got "busted." According to Sue, the other co-owner of Regen, "the building manager called (Ross) and emailed him... she said cops are staking out the building and Ross thinks people will get arrested if the show happens tonight." This was the day that a show with Positive Reinforcement and Blank Stare was supposed to happen. No replacement venue could be found. The Retching Red show was supposed to be there and got moved literally three hours before it happened. Needless to say, it was hard to get the word out and turnout was fairly small.

The Cuntree Club itself had to stop doing shows for a bit due to some hassles with the cops and other town authorities. One alternative has sprung up, the Lily Pad, a small arts space on the Cambridge/Somerville line, which is somewhat less-accessible by public transportation, not being near a subway line. And, once again, you never know how long it'll last.

I want to put this situation in a bit of context. This year, Boston has had a tremendous upsurge in violent crime. Brian McGrory wrote in a July *Boston Globe* column, *"Boston, in late July, already has more homicides than in any full year from 1998 to 2000, and 2006 is on pace to be the deadliest year since 1995."* I could write several columns about why this is happening from a socioeconomic perspective, but my point is the cops should be investigating these crimes instead of worrying about a few dozen people having a punk show in a practice space. Why not stake out some of the neighborhoods where these murders are occurring? Don't take that statement to mean that I approve of cops' actions that harass people in those neighborhoods. Far from it, but what's their priority?

This is nothing new. Basement and DIY spaces are always getting busted or hassled around here. Hey, maybe it's time to bring DIY "above ground." Out of the basements and halls and out to the Fitchburg Airport in Central Massachusetts for the Warped Tour. I could have been there with the "DIY punks," as the rather clueless *Globe* rock critic Sarah Rodman called it. Yep—DIY, with its $3 bottles of water, overpriced food and crass marketing. Also, I don't know if they did it this year but, in the past, there were military recruitment booths set up. Heck, though, it's all about community. Justin from Anti-Flag said this from the stage: *"Right here, today, this community set an example for the rest of the world!"* Example of what? How to be part of a marketing demographic? How to be jammed into a hot, contained environment? I'd ask Justin myself but I haven't talked to him or the other Anti-Flaggers since seeing them at a Fat Wreck Chords showcase when they had to cut the conversation short for a photo shoot. True story. Enough of that, though.

The next part isn't that chipper, either. Sorry, sometimes these columns get like that and this passage is a bit more intense. This issue will be "hitting the streets" in September. Does anyone say that anymore? It's kind of like saying a record will "drop" on a certain date and I always quip that it's going to be broken if it drops. HAHAHAHA! I'd better stop with the low-rent humor before Golnar and Chris make me an ex-columnist!

September. I don't need to tell you what anniversary comes in September, on the 11th. Five years. I can't believe it. I'm sure the build-up to the marking of this anniversary will begin hard and heavy weeks before it happens. Ellen says she's already hearing about it on NPR. More flags will fly, you'll be hearing "God Bless America" at more baseball games and other gatherings, the news reports will be overrun with reminiscences and endless footage of the day's events, including the crashes.

I don't want to see that footage anymore. I don't want to see the new Oliver Stone movie about it, *World Trade Center*, just as I didn't want to see *United 93*, about the plane that crashed in the field in Pennsylvania. I don't want to hear Neil Young's song "Let's Roll." I *definitely* don't want to hear Toby Keith's "Courtesy of the Red White and Blue" or Lee Greenwood's "God Bless the USA." Neither Keith nor Greenwood served in the military, incidentally. Neither did gung-ho Ted Nugent nor redneck "This Ain't No Rag, It's a Flag" singer Charlie Daniels.

It's not that I want to block out what happened, but I have my reasons. This time of year is hard for me. It's hard for everyone. I'm not attempting to say my loss was bigger than anyone else's, just tell my story. Many of you who have read my writing elsewhere or know me personally understand how this day in 2001 affected me. Ellen and I suffered a tremendous personal loss. We're not the only ones, of course. But I'm trying to give a bit of my own perspective, if you'll allow me. Hell, I wasn't even going to write about this until I realized when most of you will be reading this column. That day, Ellen and I lost a family member, even though she wasn't related by blood. Our friend Jane Simpkin was on the second plane that was hijacked. I always bring it up, I always talk to people about it. I always write about it. I never stop thinking about Jane.

To keep her memory alive, I want to tell you a bit about her. Simply put, she was one of the most amazing people I've ever know. She overcome a tremendous amount of adversity in her life, which I won't detail, but it was formidable.. She had just started law school and would have been one of the most kick-ass defense attorneys ever—I'm certain of that. She could come across as intimidating at first, with that distinctive British accent of hers. She favored black clothing, had a ton of tattoos and close-cropped hair, to say nothing of the fact that she would let you know her point of view in no uncertain terms, but she was also a friend who was always there for us and one of the most compassionate, kindest people I've ever known. She had an easy laugh and an even sicker sense of humor than myself.

I'd known her since the early '80s—we met

through the hardcore scene around '83 or '84 and she went off to college in Michigan. Jane became a contributor to *Suburban Punk/Voice*. She'd send in scene reports. She sent me flyers and a 7" by a band from there called The State. You may have heard of them. I review their new LP in this column. It's one of my all-time favorite 7"s and who knows if I would have known about it if she didn't send it? One of my favorite memories with her was going to see Raw Power in Western Mass. She bought a bottle of something, drank it with the Raw Power guys and got so trashed she couldn't remember the directions for me to get her back to her house. We figured it out eventually. She hated when I told that story. I hope she doesn't mind now because it still makes me smile.

I lost touch with her sometime after that until I ran into her completely randomly on the street while going to a Nirvana show at an MIT dorm in 1990. Over the next few years, as we both went through some difficult times, Jane and I became very close friends and she also became one of Ellen's best friends, as well. We would go to shows together. I have a photo of the three of us at Lollaplooza sometime in the 90s (I know—hey, the tickets were free and it was a different time in my life). Another favorite memory is going to her with to the Ozzfest in 1999 and seeing Black Sabbath and Slayer, then writing a joint review of the show. Jane was more into metal by then but her musical tastes were still diverse. I went with her to that show, Pantera, and Metallica, among others, during the '90s. As I alluded to earlier, I tend to think of my close friends as being more my real family than those I'm related to by blood. My *real* sister died that day. My "biological" sister, someone who will never understand what I'm about nor cares to, told me about a year afterward that I should get over it and move on. I've tried to move on with my life but there remains an extreme emptiness. I *loved* her. Besides Ellen, I've never met anyone so completely on the same wavelength as myself. That day, our hearts were ripped out and nothing will ever replace it. That sounds like some shitty emo lyric but it's the truth.

That's all. Sorry to be so maudlin but I really needed to get those thoughts out there. On to the happier part of our program, the music reviews:

ARMY OF JESUS – Book Bomb (Criminal IQ, 7" EP)

This band is so fucking hot. Third 7" already and another strong effort. Nothing complicated, just solid hardcore punk with hoarse vocals and hard-hitting songs. It's dawned on me that Doug's voice is reminiscent of Clifford from Bl'ast and some of the riffs have similarity with that band, especially "Human Worth Index." Burnin'. (3540 N. Southport, Chicago, IL 60657, www.criminaliq.com)

BAD REACTION – Symptoms of Youth (Destroy All Records, CD)

Melodic hardcore punk. Such a broad definition, but it's an upbeat merging of West Coast and DC influences and a smidgen of '80s emocore. "Caught in a Corner," for instance, reminds me of *Subject to Change*-era Faith. No tough mosh beatdowns, no metal slog to go along with the substance-free sentiments. Plus a tribute (?) to Gatorade. They forgot to name-check my favorite, raspberry lemonade, but I'll raise a 32 oz. toast to 'em right now. (PO Box 520, Van Nuys, CA 91408, www.badreaction.com)

BORN/DEAD – Endless War... Repetition (Prank, CD)

Catching up with Born/Dead, merging the songs off their split with Consume and the five songs from a limited 12" EP they had for their tour. The merging of the titles come from the leadoff track of both the split and EP and it could apply to what's been going on with this country's military, to be endlessly repeated ad infinitum, I'm afraid. The songs off the Consume split are among my favorite from this band. Rampaging crust punk with urgency and power. The later songs have a little more somberness (especially the outro to "Comfort in Ignorance") along with something of an "epic" flavor. Sometimes lacking the directness but still well-worth hearing. A few live video tracks are also included. (PO Box 410092, SF, CA 94141, www.prankrecords.com)

CLUSTERFUCK/RAT BYTE – This Is For Ruining My Life (Party Time, 7" EP)

I reviewed this as a CD-R earlier this year and it's finally out on vinyl. Hot hardcore punk. Clusterfuck put out a 13 song 7" some time back and the credo on that record was "humans disappoint me." That hasn't changed with such songs as "Flagfucker," "NATO Needs Shock Treatment" and "God Told Me to Buy Stocks." Shit Eating Grin" throws in a stolen Black Sabbath riff for a split second. A quavery, high-timbred singing style adds a distinct element to their driving sound. Skate-thrashers Rat Byte contribute four new songs, starting with a crossover-tinged intro before kicking it into gear. A flailing energy and their best-sounding songs to date. (www.ratbyte.net)

CONGA FURY – Dear Friends (Six Weeks, CD)

On the back of the booklet, it says "Love Noise" and "Chaotic Noise" is imprinted on the CD. Yeah, I'd say that's about right. Everything pushed into the red zone on the recording console, no doubt. The final song, which happens to be the title track, is epic in comparison, a four-minute-plus dose of mid-tempo rock, albeit with the same type of buzz. A steady diet of this would make my head explode—raw, frenetic and distorted. It's tough to get through 25 tracks, to be honest, although I'm still drawn in. (225 Lincoln Avenue, Cotati, CA 94931, www.sixweeksrecords.com)

CONVERSIONS – s/t (Namennayo, 7" EP)

This eponymous EP by Boston band the Conversions follows a split with Witches With Dicks and, as good as the split was, the six songs here are even better. Tight, dynamic hardcore punk maintaining the aggression along with on-a-dime stops and starts. "The Worms" has a slower-burning intensity. No matter the tempo, Terry's primal scream vocals cut through with an uncontained ferocity. They've really gelled as a band in a fairly short period of time. (1121 Arlington Blvd., Apt. 741, Arlington, VA 22209, band contact: christopherstrunk@yahoo.com)

DEFCON 4 – File Under Fuck (Black Box, CD)

OK, so the Dixie Chicks have a song called "Not Ready to Make Nice." I doubt Defcon 4 will ever make nice, either. The band's second album, only 15 tracks this time instead of 28 but remaining intense. I'm searching for the adjectives. This is uncomfortable, unsettling music with herky-jerky, non-catchy songs. Non-catchy in the traditional sense. Once in awhile, Defcon 4 will follow a basic riff structure such as the opening "Fast Car," "Insomniac's Daydream" or "Nice Neck." but then allow it to decompose in one way or another. A Black Flag/Bl'ast jones runs through the compositions, though it's not an exclusive influence. Snaky guitar lines and howled vocals from Dug that sound as though he's trying to vomit up the bile that possesses him. Violent, jarring jolts. (PO Box 110-154, Williamsburg, NY 12111, www.blackboxrecordings.net)

GROSS NATIONAL PRODUCT – Ronald McVomit's 14 Song Happy Meal (Bacon Towne, 7" EP)

I was talking with a friend who lived in Florida for a short time and she was lamenting the fact there weren't really any good hardcore bands down there. Well, that's not true and GNP disprove her theory. This EP is much-improved over their first demo. Marley has a unique, expressive high-pitched voice with an unaffected quality. Straight-ahead speedy hardcore punk in short doses and lyrics that are sarcastic, ironic and pointed. (PO Box 1063, Tallevast, FL 34270, www.upthefuckingpigs.com)

HOMOSTUPIDS – The Glow EP (My Mind's Eye, 7" EP)

Steve Peffer from 9 Shocks Terror is in this band and it's a noisy dose of hardcore meets raw garage rock. Three rockin' songs, with "Apeshit" fast and ripping and the other pair of songs in a mid-tempo. Gloriously blown-out sounding. One of the songs is "Flies Die" and they will if they buzz by the speakers while this is playing. (homostupids@yahoo.com)

INMATES – Assholes Unanimous (Painkiller, LP)

Clevo assholes, to be specific, and if you know anything about the coterie of inbred bands from there, you know what to expect. Burning, buzzing hardcore, with a looseness and unhinged quality and you can tell right away where these guys come from. This LP was recorded in '99 and had a limited release. Masterminded by the Melnick brothers, who are also in Cider (they were also in Integrity), among other bands, and the vocals have the same faux-English accent. Cynical and angry and occasionally PC-tweaking. Side two opens and closes by showing another side of the band, the jazzy free-form noise of "B.Z. Blues" and the "lounge version" of "Cement Shoes." Inspirational line: "I'm mopping the puke off my wall." That speaks volumes right there. (www.painkiller records.com)

HEIMAT-LOS – La Seconde Nécessaire 1983-1988 (Ratbone, 2xCD)

Everything but the kitchen sink, to use a hoary phrase, from this '80s era French punk band, aka Heimat-Los. The second disc is all live, plus some demo material, and not really as

necessary, to be honest. The first disk collects all their studio tracks from vinyl releases, comps and demos. The songs are in reverse chronological order and you can hear the progression from rough, thrashy punk to something incorporating more melody. UK punk guitar lines merging with hardcore speed. Not a 100% success rate. I'm not sure I'd put these guys in the top tier of European punk from the time but they certainly had their share of hard-hitting songs, especially for the earlier recordings. (c/o Luc Ardilouze, BP 40011, 33023 Bordeaux cedex, FRANCE, http://ratbone.free.fr)

MORAL DECAY – I Quit (Get Revenge, CD)

Entertaining, occasionally tongue-in-cheek thrash/crossover. Some cheesy intro effects, an acoustic song to wrap things up and, in between, the riffs come hard and furiously. There's even a fucking ska/metal song ("Funeral")—not as ludicrous as it sounds. OK, maybe a bit ludicrous. In the main, though, it's heaviness in a similar vein as Toxic Holocaust, et al. Viva la crossover! (www.getrevengerecords.com)

ORDER OF THE WHITE ROSE – War Machine (Unitree Recordings, CD)

A nice combination of styles—Order of the White Rose are from Hawaii but this ain't no happy-sounding summer music. Politically charged songs, plain-spoken and direct. OOTWR draw from both straight-ahead punk and some of the UK anarcho bands. Burning riffs and haunting melodies, as well, along with the occasional reggae rhythm. No matter the feel of the song, it's angry and impassioned. An impressive debut. (PO Box 880906, Pukalani, HI 96788, brokelegdog@hotmail.com)

PELIGRO SOCIAL – No Religíon (No Options/Tankcrimes, CD)

Despite the band's name and lyrics being in Spanish, they hail from the Bay Area. Much like such bands as No Hope For The Kids, Peligro Social have discovered the joys of older, catchy punk along with rock 'n roll influences. Snotty vocals, tasty guitar licks and mainly at a fast pace, although they also opt for medium tempo, as well. "Todosa La Mieira" does a pretty good job taking a little of the Pistol's "Sub-Mission" riff and turning it into their own engaging tune. Along with their split with Born/Dead, this is highly enjoyable. (www.nooptionsrecords.com or www.tank crimes.com)

PESD – POLitiKäPOizONëKURVvae (Prank, LP/Trujaca Fala, CD)

Industrial hardcore influenced by Killing Joke's doominess and Ministry's electro-shock approach. That best describes PESD who are from Warsaw and includes Amoniak from Tragedia and Smoku from Post-Regiment. The two collaborators utilize drill-press guitars, mechanized rhythms and synthesized effects to channel the aggression. Not all flailing aggro—"What's Up" (translating from the Polish) is more melodic. Amoniak's vocals maintain the same harsh cadence. It's hardcore with a different approach, a different angle, while remaining intense. (PO Box 410092, SF, CA 94141-0892, www.prankrecords. com/PO Box 13, 81806 SOPOT 6, POLAND, www.trujacafala.com)

RADICAL ATTACK – Priority (Vinyl Addict, LP)

Seriously, sometimes I get confused with all these bands that have radical, crucial, attack, unit, etc. in their names. So let's see if I can get this one straight. I saw them play with Crucial Attack in the summer of '05 and they had a split with that band, as well as Talk Hard. In any case, there's a chip on their shoulder, to quote some old Boston hardcore band. Double-speed thrash and head-stomping breakdowns, really getting stompy for "Annihilator." Semi-cheesy gang backup vocals aside, there's something to this band's unvarnished anger. (1835, De Bourgogne, Sherbrooke (Quebec) JIJ 1B1, CANADA, vinyladdictrecords@hotmail.com)

STATE – All Wrong (Underestimated, LP)

I never thought I'd see this happen. The State put out one of the greatest hardcore 7"s ever. That's right—one of the best ever. From Michigan but not getting nearly the notice that Negative Approach did, mainly due to the fact that the EP was out of print for years, until Havoc did a re-pressing. It was an ugly, in-your-face sound. Nothing posi or pleasant about it and it provided one hell of a release. There was a mediocre 12" released sometime in the '80s and there's also a scorching '83 demo that will finally see the light of day on the upcoming Grand Theft Audio CD anthology. That was it, until the past few years when The State began playing again, with three-quarters of the original lineup joined by a new bassist. Since they weren't that huge to begin with, it's not like some old band getting back together to cash in. It's probably based more on a desire to rage once again. Hitting middle age sucks, seeing how the world hasn't changed much since the early '80s also sucks. Trust me on that one. This is good therapy for a mid-life crisis, both theirs and mine. Full-bore aggression, sputtering guitar licks, thumping rhythms and angry vocals. Preston Woodward's voice has deepened a bit with age and it makes him sound more agitated. A few of the songs from that '83 demo show up here along with the new material and there's a hardened cynicism to the lyrics and a still-hard approach in the playing. They railed against the futility of army life on "Attention" on their first EP and that returns for "Already Dead" and "Easy Victim." Meanwhile, "Christian" is succinct in its message—there's something enjoyable about hearing Preston bellow "Christian—full of shit!" Mellow out? Give in? Not about to happen. (1349 N. Bell, Chicago, IL 60622, underestimatedrecords@gmail.com)

VOLENDAM DISEASE – s/t (Kangaroo/Even Worse, 7" EP)

Volendam Disease are from Japan, although they're named after a city in Holland (so says Kangaroo honcho Henk). I don't give a fuck *where* they're from, to be honest. All that matters is they crank out some fast, ripping hardcore, infused with speed and attitude. I get the feeling these guys would be a blast to see live but these five songs will have to do for the time being. The thrashy Japanese sound with a slightly cleaner, modern approach.

(www.geocities.com/tysonkangaroo or www.geocities.com/evenworserecords)

Mr. Quint/PO Box 2746, Lynn, MA 01903
suburbanvoice@earthlink.net
Sonic Overload radio:
http://sonicoverload.moo cowrecords.com)

Another Pleasant Valley Sunday

We'd just strolled back from the new farmers' market with some organic veggies and handmade avocado soap. Unusually warm for August. Everyone was out enjoying the nice weather on the leafy avenues of semi-suburban Oakland. We were shooting the shit with some of our neighbors when one of them (a mother of three unruly but loveable boys) mentioned how bored she was with summer. The other neighbor essentially shot her down, although I doubt she intended to be quite so forceful. She pointed out that we (meaning us affluent Westerners, I suppose) had nothing to complain about compared to all those suffering in the world. We have it so easy compared to, for example, the mothers losing their children to Israeli bombs in Lebanon. To say it was overkill, as a response to an offhand remark from a tired mum wishing her kids were back at school, is an understatement.

The first neighbor isn't totally insensitive to the problems of the world. Nor is her biggest problem the fact that her kids are home all day during the summer, not by a long shot. She was just making conversation. That's a luxury many of us enjoy, but that none of us can really afford. We can turn off the TV, put down (or never pick up) the newspaper. But like the mother (a different one) that I heard about recently who has recently decided to hold her son's Bar Mitzvah in Israel, our ignorance has the potential to make us look very silly indeed. This is one reason I try to be aware of what's going on in the world, though it often makes for depressing reading.

Later that same day, we crossed the bay to drop off some birthday presents for a young friend who's turning nine. She's into football (or Sawkir as these Sherman Tanks call it) so we got her a book on the subject penned (or ghost-penned) by football's Mr. Nice Guy, Gary Lineker. It was a British book, but had obviously been mucked about with for the US edition—in other words, they'd put a girl on the cover. The rest of the book was devoid of any reference to the idea that girls might want to play the game. And it's been 25 years since the release of *Gregory's Girl*! Did Bill Forsyth teach

the world nothing?

Luckily, my young acquaintance is growing up in America, where she can have upstanding female football role models like Mia Hamm. If she was born on the other side of the pond, her only avenue into the world of football would be to hang around shit upscale nightclubs with her gear hanging out in the hope of achieving the ultimate in status positions in tabloid Britain, that of Footballer's Wife. Unfortunately, this probably does *not* mean she'll ever have her own line of $400 designer jeans, like Victoria Beckham's got.

A mate of mine told me he and an accomplice used to drive around LA late at night in a beat-up '75 Mustang deliberately crashing into parked cars. They would only pick new, expensive cars, and obviously didn't hang around to witness the outcome of their actions. Apparently there's a right way and wrong way to trash parked cars: you don't want to hit the bumper straight on because you run the risk of getting tangled up on it. The best way is to drive perpendicular to the target, or to arc into the car in a sort of sideswipe.

Now, whenever his car breaks down, he remembers stupid shit he did when he was young and wonders if he's being punished. A sort of *Car*ma, if you'll allow that terrible joke. I don't really believe in superstitious shit like that, although I know a lot of people do. I can't help thinking that if karma existed, a lot more people would get their just desserts. There are too many cunts getting away with too much evil shit for karma to be real. Maybe they *will* pay for it in the next life or whatever but I'd much rather see them suffer for it now. Besides, I would hope that if there were some kind of cosmic being or force controlling everything they've got bigger fish to fry than punishing some 40-year-old dude for some juvenile destructive shit he pulled when he was a teenager. I have to hope that, because otherwise I'm in big trouble myself.

I turned 36 last month. Anyone who knows me will tell you I'm a young 36, but I'm no spring chicken by any stretch, and I'm not getting any younger. It wouldn't bother me in the slightest except that I'm starting to notice a disturbing trend in people that stick around here for any length of time—they get health problems. Right now at least two longtime MRR contributors are suffering from debilitating illnesses. It seems that if you're a punk and you don't live fast and die young, you're going to end up getting really sick. So I'm starting to look for an exit strategy. I don't want to join the corporate rat race because those over-fed fucks just get heart attacks and I'm Scottish already so I don't need to increase my chances of that. I'm looking for a new lifestyle that I can get into where I'm not going to get sick. A secondary benefit to jumping ship will hopefully mean that whatever new scene I adopt, the only other men my age won't be the sort of people who post photos of their record collections online and are unable to hold a conversation with the opposite sex.

Suggestions: allan@dropout.cc or PO Box 22971, Oakland, CA 94609.

"You were in False Prophets?" asks this crazy girl named Lynn over MySpace. That place on the internet that is kinda fucking cool. I write her back and tell her I was.

"I saw you at Max's Kansas City and...." she writes back.

I write her back explaining I had joined the band a couple of years after that, but I don't think she cares, she's now into how she's recording with Sonny Vincent and has met Joy Ryder's husband over MySpace as well. I feel like telling her that Paul Ryder is my pal, not Joy's ex, and besides, he's 17. But instead, I tell her to just read about my days in The False Prophets in *Maximumrocknroll*.

Looney tunes.

I guess it happens when the insane ones get old.

***

It was like the fifth day in a row that it was over a hundred degrees. And of course, the van had no air-conditioning.

Actually, it didn't have a lot of things.

A radio.

Good tires.

A left head-light.

Brakes.

But who the fuck cared? It was punk rock.

And besides, our vehicle was still better than the old school bus that carried the other bands, DOA, and The Cheetah Chrome Motherfuckers (CCM). We (the False Prophets), somehow always ended up on tour during severe weather. One time we toured the mid-west when it was under minus five degrees for over four days, and we had no heat in the van. But that's another story.

***

I joined the False Prophets in 1985.

They had been together for almost five years at that point, having had a couple of singles out, and some cuts of various compilations. The way I heard that they were looking for a guitar player was that I saw an ad in the *Village Voice* classified section. There was also an ad for a band called Artless, who were also looking for a guitar player.

Being that I already had been playing PUNK ROCK for at least five years, I knew both these bands.

The False Prophets were a local band with a huge left-wing cult following. They sounded a lot like the Dead Kennedys with a real singer. They were kinda funny, and really cool.

Artless was a local band fronted by this guy named Mykel Board, who wrote articles in this magazine called *Maximumrocknroll*, which I read every month. So I called the numbers in both ads and set up auditions.

***

The first audition was for Artless. It was a hot August day, and the guy on the phone told me to meet him at this place called the music building on Thirty-eighth street and Eighth Avenue. When I got there I noticed it was a high class area. There were peep-shows on every corner, and hookers hanging out in front of the building. I looked at my watch and noticed I was like a half-hour early.

In those days I was always early. I hated being late. And I hated when people were late. I mean, I used to set my clock ahead, so I'd be early. I still set my clock ahead. But now I know it is set ahead, so I take my time, and am no longer early. Maybe I'll set my clock even more ahead, then I'll start being early again. But I guess eventually I'll know I set my clock ahead, and then give myself some more time.

Anyway, so, since I was early, I figured I'd have a look around. I peeked in some of the sex-shops that called out to me with neon signs flashing "Naked girls, twenty-five cents."

I figured, hey, that's a good price. A bit steep, but what the fuck?

So I go into one of these sex-shops and there are these little booths in the back. I enter the booth, close the door behind me, and put a quarter in. This window rises up, and there, in front of me, is this girl's crotch. If you can call it that. It was scary. I'd never seen anything like it before. There was all this hair between these two large legs that were pressed together. More hair than on the faces of the guys in System of a Down.

And there were these scars.

Oh my god. It seemed as if this woman had been cut in half, then sewn back together.

So this crotch continues to gyrate in front of my face, and then the woman stops pushing her legs together. She spreads them apart.

And then it happened.

Geezus.

Oy revolt.

Out from between her legs pops a penis that had been hidden between her/his thighs. A big one, too.

I ran out of there and on to the street.

Whew. I was kinda in shock from what I had just seen. But then I felt my heart sink down to my bowels, then rise up to my throat. I had forgotten my guitar in "there." I went back in, and this large woman walks up to me with my guitar and asks in a very deep voice if I forgot something. I tell her she is holding my guitar, and can I have it back, please. She gives it to me and laughs as I run out of the place. It wasn't until years later that I entered one of those places again.

***

Eight years to be exact.

It was Halloween, and me and My Future Ex-Wife and Chicken John from the band that can not be mentioned, and the guys in New Republic, and Evan, and Scot and Marc from Iron Prostate, and Scot's girlfriend Laura, and who ever the fuck else had just got done trick or treating in New Jersey.

We were in Chicken's van, and all the way

back to the city, Chicken keep telling us how horny he was. So we decided that as a token of our appreciation for him, we'd get him some oral sex from a hooker. Hey, it was his idea. And it was only twenty bucks. Or so we had heard from our pal Unk, who knew about such things.

So we start driving on all these side streets in the city where all the hookers are. And there are hundreds of them!

Wow, I couldn't believe it. They were in all shapes and colors. It was amazing. Some were fully dressed, some were wearing skimpy underwear, and some were even naked. Wow!

So as we are driving past all these girls/guys dressed as girls, me and Evan begin to feel like we are on an episode of "Wild Kingdom" or some National Geographic or something.

"Look Evan," I say to him as we pass a girl in a black leather outfit, "there is the wild mistress beast which is very common to this locale." He nods his head as he points out the skinny topples woman with the large gazongas, and explains to me that she is a rare species of Homo-siliconas. I nod my head.

Chicken starts whining in the back of the van that he is really horny now, and wants a woman. So I figure we might as well start getting quotes. Chicken points out a fine breed of hooker, and we drive up to her. Evan rolls down the window and asks how much.

She looks at everyone in the van, and says, "What, you want me to do all of you? That'll be expensive."

Evan explains just one guy, and she says she'll do it for thirty. Evan and I, being the Jews that we are, know we can get a better deal. We drive on as Chicken grabs his groin and whines like a girl. Finally we see another girl that Chicken wants. We drive up to her, and she kinda looks familiar.

As soon as we roll down the window, she says, "Hey, it's George and Chicken John from the band that can not be mentioned." We kinda smile sheepishly, then speed away. By this point, Chicken will settle for anything. He is in the back of the van asking the guys from New Republic how much they would charge, and then he starts asking me if he can buy My Future Ex-Wife. I tell him I wouldn't sell her to a donkey show, but maybe to a circus. Looking back, I should have.

Anyway, we spot another girl that looks okay. Well, okay is not the word. This girl is beautiful. She has long blonde hair, and legs that go up to her neck.

Must be really rough to shave, though.

Anyway, so well pull up to her, and she smiles and leans into the window of the van. Evan explains that we have a friend who needs some "attention," and how much would it be. She asks who, and we tell her Chicken. She steps back from the van and starts yelling, "What? You want me to do a Chicken? Look, I do oral, I do anal, I do half and half, but I certainly don't do no animals!"

She then runs to her pimp. The guy is wearing a large hat with a feather in it, and gold on every joint of his body. Straight out of Starsky and Hutch. I wonder where Huggy Bear is. Then the pimp starts doing his pimp walk toward the van. You know, that kinda walk where it looks like ya got a back problem so ya keep straightening yourself out. Everyone in the van now starts screaming that we are gonna die, so we speed away.

And Chicken is still unsatisfied.

***

So we figure, okay, we'll go to "Show-World."

Show-World is a porn castle on 42nd Street in New York. We get there so Chicken can relieve himself, and so we can have something to do. The place is huge. Three or four floors of wall to wall porn. Except the place is decorated like a circus. There are video booths, and booths were you can see naked ladies. Suddenly I had a flash back of the last time I was at one of these places, and a large penis came to mind.

Doh.

But we all decided to check out the naked ladies together.

Now ya gotta see this in your mind. This lady dances naked in the middle of the room. The room is circular, and little windows go up and down all around the room. So we all go into different booths and all can see one another cause we are all in a circle.

So we all start waving to each other, and there is this naked lady dancing around in the middle of the floor, and she is wondering what the hell is going on. We keep waving to each other, and finally the lady gets mad, and decides to block my view with her crotch. I of course run the hell out of there, not wanting any "surprises."

We spend the next half hour of our lives in Show-world looking for Chicken John. He is hidden somewhere behind one of like the three hundred doors to video booths and live shows. My Future Ex-Wife is getting tired, and I really gotta go to the bathroom. We keep knocking on all the closed doors saying, "Chicken? Chicken, are you in there?" All these deep male voices yell that we should leave them alone.

One voice says, "Chicken? How much?"

We finally find Chicken behind the door of a video booth on the second floor. He says he is "almost done," and to wait. We do. Finally he exits with a smile on his face, and we then start to leave. As soon as we get to the van, we realize that Scot and Laura are missing. We find them having some kind of drunken sex in one of the booths.

So, where was I? Oh yeah.

***

So I go back to the Music Building, and out front is this blonde haired guy who looks like Billy Idol, complete with a crucifix around his neck and everything. Also there is this little guy. I mean little. And he has a black t-shirt on that says "Rat-Fucker." He is kinda balding, and wearing all black.

He says, "George?" I tell him yeah, and he explains he is Mykel Board, and this other guy is Joe Shmoe, and we are the two guys today auditioning for Artless. We all shake hands and go up to the room where all the amps and stuff are.

The rest of the band show up, and the other guy goes first.

He plays guitar like a sissy, and does lots of faggy new-wave poses. Mykel thanks him, and then it is my turn. We do a couple of Artless tunes including "How Much Punk Rock Do You Hear in Russia?" and "I Am a Rock."

Mykel thanks me for coming down, and I go home. I couldn't tell if he liked me or not. I mean, right before he shook my hand when I was leaving, he picked his nose. Oh well.

***

The next afternoon I went to audition for the False Prophets.

They had a space of their own on Avenue B and 10th Street.

The East Village.

The Very East Village.

Out in front of their studio were hookers as well. Also lots of junkies and strange looking people.

I knocked on the door of the False Prophets studio, and a really strange looking guy answered. He had a Hitler mustache, pierced ears, and the longest fucking fingernails I had ever seen. He told me his name was Stephen, and he was the lead singer. As he took me into the room, he introduced me to Steve, the bass player, and Ned, the drummer. Nice enough guys, I figured. Strange, but nice.

Ned looked cool with his long red hair, but when he played the drums, he would go into this zombie like trance. And Steve, he looked kinda old to be playing punk rock. His hair was all gray, and he kept saying, "ugggh" a lot between words. But they were all really nice. I played some songs with them, and had a good time. They told me they would call me if I made the audition. And if I didn't hear from them, to call them in a couple of days.

I wound up calling them.

I got Steve on the phone, and he told me there was someone else they were interested in. He said that maybe they should have two guitar players, and to show up tomorrow, so they could audition both of us together.

I showed up, and there was this *girl* there.

A girl!

They wanted me to play in this punk rock band with a girl!

Now, no offense or anything, but I had just got done being in a band with two *girls* in Florida. These two girls were gay. And they both decided to go out with each other. And they fucked up everything.

It always became us against them.

The them being the two girls, and us, the rest of the band. I figured shit, now they want this girl to be in the band, and if she winds up going out with one of the guys, it will be "us vs. them" again.

I introduced myself to the girl. Her name was Debbie. She was cute. I figured this was gonna be trouble.

We started to play and this girl rocked. She played awesome leads and everything. I played my Johnny Ramone style of punk, and together we sounded awesome. It was really cool. When we got done playing, the guys asked both of us to join the band. I said yeah, and she said yes, but that she would never date anyone in the band. And she didn't.

And the band was great for years.

And she finally did.

And the band died.

***

The next day I called Mykel Board to tell him I joined the False Prophets. He said that was okay, 'cause they didn't want me anyway. They wanted this cute chick named "Debbie."

Go figure.

Anyway, he didn't get either of us.

***

So, where was I, oh yeah, it was the fifth day in a row at over a hundred degrees, and we were on one of our wonderful U.S. tours.

This time we were out with DOA and CCM. Both great bands. Both totally nuts.

DOA liked to drink beer.

Um, that is putting it very mildly.

DOA existed to drink beer. These guys drank more beer than anyone I had ever seen. We played this club in Kentucky with them, and each guy almost put away a whole case.

Wow.

And CCM...

What can I say about a bunch of guys from Italy who could hardly speak English, and who had a lead singer whose stomach looked like an Atlas road map, and who, along with his girlfriend Pigmy, had gotten the worst case of body lice I had ever seen?

Anyway, it is really fucking hot, and me and our roadie at the time, Marc, who later joined Letch Patrol and Iron Prostate, are over heating.

The school bus with the other bands in front of us pulls over to the side of the highway.

The driver, Gary, gets out and goes and lays down in the middle of the field. I ask him what he is doing, and he says "Power-Napping." He then falls right asleep, and wakes up totally refreshed five minutes later.

Punk Rock.

Meanwhile, Marc and I are feeling sicker by the second. We had played a show in Rhode Island the night before, and both a bit hung over. Also, we were kinda weirded out from the girls we had met. One was named Betsy, the other, I can't remember her name. Maybe Marc does. We met them at the show at AS 221, the coffee house/club we had played at. They took us home to their house were we, of course tried to sleep with them.

I got further along than Marc, who spent the whole night begging the girl just to let him sleep in the same bed as her. I mean, she was walking around naked, and kept touching him, then told him she liked him, then made him sleep on the floor. Meanwhile I was having fun with Betsy, not knowing she was the promoters girlfriend. We were lucky to leave the state in one piece. For some reason, Marc and I dubbed it the "Eraser Head State."

So after Gary wakes up, he gets back in the bus and begins the rest of the drive to Dayton, Ohio.

Ya wanna talk about shitholes? Forget what I said about Florida. Florida is Disneyland compared to Dayton.

We get there and it is only 107 degrees. We get to the house were we are staying. Of course there is only one kind of water running.

Hot.

And I need to take a shower.

Bad.

Well, actually, I always need to take a shower. I love the shower. I take like four or five of them a day. Ya can never feel too clean.

And here we are in Dayton. With no cold water. So I practically burn my skin off, but get clean. And now I feel really nauseous. Marc and I decide we are hungry, and ask where the nearest place to eat is. The hippie we are staying with says there is a McDonalds two blocks away.

We're there, dude.

We enter the place, and we are like the only punks there. Actually, we are the only people there. Except for the four people behind the counter. Oh yeah. Of course there is no air conditioning in the place.

Anyway, they have these big signs for something called "McPizza." We had never seen something like this, and each decide to get one. I bite into mine, and there is all this brown stuff inside. And it tastes terrible. Marc bites into his, and the same thing is inside. He then marches up to the counter and tells the girl, "This isn't McPizza, this is McShit."

We both left, pissed and hungry.

We see a sign for downtown Dayton, and it said one and a half miles. We figured, what the fuck, it was now only a hundred and ten, at least according the to lit up bank sign, and we had nothing better to do, then to go find food.

And air conditioning.

So we walk and walk, sweating like Mayor Dinkins. We finally reach downtown. We get to the corner of First Street and First Avenue, and low and behold, we see a Wendy's. I figure a salad bar would do me good. Light and cold. Marc wants a Frosty.

We enter the place and it is freezing. It feels great. I eat like five plates full of salad, and Marc has three large Frosties. Chocolate. I go into their bathroom and take a shower in their sink. By the time I'm done, the floor is under water. But no matter. We feel great. We feel as though we can make it back to the house with the hippie in it with no problem.

We step outside. It is so hot that our bodies go into some sort of shock.

Marc kneels down, and throws up all three Frosties.

All these people are walking by, and think nothing of it. I can't believe it. This guys just pukes all this brown stuff, and no one even blinks an eye. So I start yelling, "Hey, look, this guy just threw up, gross!" But no one cares. Then I start to feel sick. I tell Marc there is no way I can walk back in this heat to that house.

We decide we will get a cab, except we remember we spent all our money, and the rest our dough is with the rest of the band.

Shit.

So then Marc gets this idea. He starts yelling that he'll eat his own vomit for a buck.

People just look at him funny.

I run inside Wendy's and get a piece of paper. I write on it with my graffiti-stick, "See a Man eat his own puke, $1 dollar!" I hold it up to people walking by. No one cares.

Quite a place, this Dayton Ohio.

Finally we give up on the idea of a cab, and start to walk back. I tell Marc I feel sick, and he dares me to throw up on the church steps on the next block.

I do.

Punk Rock.

We make it back to the house, and do the punk thing. Use my mom's credit card, and get a hotel room. No one in the False Prophets wants to help pay for it, so it is me and Marc. But then Sid, the singer from CCM, and his girlfriend, Pigmy, say they'll split it with us. We tell them okay, and we all take one room.

Then Sid and Pigmy cover themselves with this lice-killing oil, and stink up the place for the whole night. They both sit around naked, and me and Marc can't help but laugh. Finally they wash themselves off, and we all get some sleep.

The next morning we wake up and go outside. The heat wave had ended. It was only 99 degrees.

Take my life, please.

Endnotes:

1. www.myspace.com/helpgeorgetabb
2. Check out Paul's band at myspace.com/paulryder
3. I'm glad Marc and Evan are still my two best friends. Some good things never change! Yay!!!!

The Beginning of the End

Recently I was asked to write an essay for a book called *Love, Castro Street: Celebrating Queer San Francisco*. Now, Castro Street truly represents everything in the world I abhor: rabid gay consumerism, straight-acting/straight-looking conformity, the deification of unquestioning masculinity, ravenous sexual objectification, and a racist, classist, misogynist, ageist, ableist, body fascist status quo that prioritizes property values and pumped pecs over anything that remotely resembles gay liberation, or any sort of liberation whatsoever.

The call for submissions for *Love, Castro Street* specified that essays did not have to center around Castro Street, and Jim Van Buskirk, one of the editors, assured me that I could be as critical as I wanted. So I decided to write about the end of San Francisco as a place where marginalized queers can go to create community, culture and resistance—an end coming about due to the gentrification, homogenization and suburbanization of San Francisco, as well as the overwhelming assimilation and apathy of most gay and queer San Franciscans. But then I decided that in order to write about the end, I had to write about the beginning, which, for me, was the early '90s, when I first moved to San Francisco—a time so filled with longing and desperation that, almost 15 years later, I've barely begun to write about it.

I started to write that essay—I wrote the first section—but then I decided that there was way too much to squeeze into the two weeks allotted before the deadline. In fact, writing about the end of San Francisco may end up being a whole book—I'm not sure yet, but here's the beginning of the project:

We knew it was the beginning of the end, but still it was the beginning. Most of us had recently escaped monstrous families of origin. We were scarred and broken and brutalized, but determined to create something else, something we could live with, something we could call home or healing or even just help, I need help here, can you help? We were incest survivors, whores, outcast kids, vegans, runaways, and sexual renegades trying not to disappear. We knew that the world wanted us dead, but we were ready for something else—we didn't always know what it was, but we were ready—if we weren't ready, then we were getting ready.

It was the Mission in the early '90s and we were queer freaks and artists and activists and sluts creating defiant and desperate ways to love and lust for and take care of one another in crowded, crumbling apartments painted in garish hues and decorated with other people's trash. We paraded down the streets in bold and ragged clothes too big or too small, we shared thriftstore treasures and recipes and strategies for getting day-glow hair dye to last. We were manic and maniacal, craving intensity and sharing breakdowns. We exchanged manifestos and 'zines and fliers and gossip, we got in dramatic fights over politics, over the weather, over clothing, over who was sleeping with whom, we held each other, we painted each other's nails and broke down—honey, we broke down.

This was the early '90s in San Francisco, and everywhere people were dying of AIDS and drug addiction and suicide, and some of the dead were among us, just like us, just trying to survive. Others were more in the distance, the elders we barely got to know except through their loss. We went crazy and cried a lot, or went crazy and stopped crying, or just went crazy. We talked about surviving rape and childhood, we organized potlucks and office takeovers, we fought for syringe distribution and universal healthcare, we fought against police brutality, gentrification and prison, we fought one another.

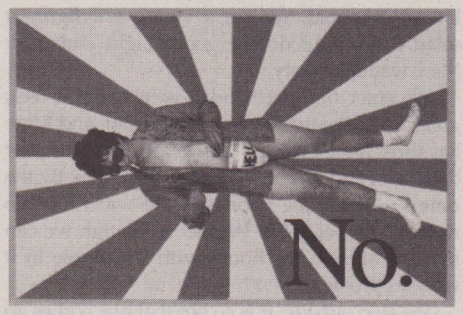
Occasionally, we won. Our heroes were the writers whose books we exchanged with lightning speed, queer writers who showed us there was maybe a little bit of hope in a world of loss: David Wojnarowicz and Dorothy Allison and Cherrie Moraga, Sapphire and Leslie Feinberg and Monique Wittig. Oh—and *The Courage to Heal*, definitely *The Courage to Heal*.

We were huddled and dreaming outside of the status quo, but still we were gentrifiers—we knew that. Some of us had grown up rich and more of us poor, but we could see the way that queer freaks and artists and activists and sluts made the Mission a safer place for the yuppies we despised. We had crazy hair and strange piercings and facial tattoos, but still we were mostly white and young and hip, even if we would have denied the young and hip part. We brought the trendy restaurants and boutiques that we gazed at with anguish and disgust, the partying suburbanites we scorned—it was our fault that clueless white people now saw the Mission not just as a high-crime Latino neighborhood or only a place for thugs and welfare cheats and crack addicts on disability. We were the beginning of the end and we didn't know what to do because we'd just found the beginning.

On another note, I'm absolutely thrilled that I finished my new anthology, *Nobody Passes: Rejecting the Rules of Gender and Conformity*, and it's brilliant! After much arguing with the publisher, I did not end up having to cut anything that I didn't want to. The book will be out in January, but I'll give you way more information before then.

Love–
mattilda

Mattilda, a.k.a. Matt Bernstein Sycamore is the editor, most recently, of *That's Revolting! Queer Strategies for Resisting Assimilation*, which will appear this Fall in an expanded second edition. Mattilda is also the author of a novel, *Pulling Taffy* (Suspect Thoughts, 2003), and she's now looking for a publisher for her delicious and devastating new novel, *So Many Ways to Sleep Badly*. Mattilda lives for feedback, so send her love letters and/or delicious threats via the recently updated website www.mattbernsteinsycamore.com, which includes past *MRR* columns. Or write to PO Box 640047 / San Francisco, CA 94164-0047.



From online open-source encyclopedia www.wikipedia.org

"Geekfest was the name of a series of free, all-ages concerts organized by California indie label SPAM Records during the 1990s. The first Geekfest was held in June 1996 on the shoreline at Point Molate in Richmond, California. This site, a former Navy fuel depot at the foot of the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge, became the default location for dozens of Geekfests, though other locations were eventually used.

In the mid-1990s, local ordinances and economic considerations led to difficult times for San Francisco Bay Area bands whose members were under 21. Several bars and nightclubs were driven out by the bustling dot-com economy. Others, fearful of losing their liquor licenses, stopped allowing minors to attend or perform on their stages.

By 1996, there was only one all-ages music venue in the East Bay—924 Gilman Street. With the rise of Green Day, Rancid, and other former underground bands making punk rock a commodity, Gilman had become an insular community, rejecting those who did not fit an increasingly narrow definition of punk. Though Gilman was not by design exclusively punk rock (they were and are explicitly devoted to independent music and arts), a combination of internal politics and aesthetic tastes of the Gilman staff kept other types of music off the stage.

The SPAM Records crew, a group of underage musicians and artists from Pinole, California, became frustrated with this situation. Their bands, most notably Bobby Joe Ebola and the Children MacNuggits, had been rejected by the punk scene for what, to their minds, were superficial differences in dress and musical style. They decided, in a DIY spirit, to create their own venue, one where nobody would be rejected for having the wrong fashion sense.

The name "Geekfest" was chosen partly because the SPAM collective saw themselves as geeks; they realized their idiosyncrasies made them unpopular at parties, but made no effort to change. Their rejection by the punk scene was viewed as just another chapter in a long history of being uncool; they had learned to embrace the things that set them apart, while keeping a sense of humor and perspective.

First Geekfest

First, SPAM founder John Geek (now vocalist for punk band Fleshies) set up a hotline, (510) BAD-SMUT, to disseminate information. In many ways, Geekfest applied the guerrilla tactics of raves to live music. Photocopied handbills listed a telephone number, but not the location of the event, to try to stop the shows being shut down by law enforcement.

Point Molate was selected as a location partly because it was already in use one Sunday a month for free outdoor "Sunset raves." It was far from any residential area, beneath a large bridge, and under confused jurisdiction as a Navy Superfund site. Technically, it was in Richmond, which had one of the nation's highest murder rates at the time. Local law enforcement, it seemed, was otherwise occupied.

Politically, the concept of Geekfest took an anarchist bent. It addressed issues of public land use, the role of the audience in art (since much of the time, the audience consisted of the other bands playing that day), and issues of hierarchy in a supposedly egalitarian punk scene.

Approximately twelve bands played the first show, most of who were made up of minors and bands who shared SPAM's sense of humor and disenfranchisement. SPAM members rented a gas-powered generator, and hired a local sound engineer to work the jury-rigged PA. In an illegal and ill-advised attempt to recoup their losses, SPAM sold cheese-filled hot dogs and cans of beer to the approximately 30 attendees. The concert lasted from about 1 P.M. until sunset.

SPAM continued putting on Geekfests, usually about one per month during the summer months and occasionally during the winter, when they could find a suitable indoor location. The locations and the bands varied widely (though many bands had repeat performances),

but the shows were always free and all-ages.

This concept of inclusion was central to the Geekfest concept, and extended to the booking policy. As word spread about the festivals, bands began calling to ask for shows, and sending promotional packages to the label's PO box. SPAM avoided listening to demo tapes they received, booking bands on a "first-come, first-served" basis. This was done to remove the bias of musical taste that SPAM blamed for their own exclusion from Gilman. As a result, the bands were often unskilled, untalented, or conversely, so polished and professional that they seemed wildly inappropriate at a no-frills, guerrilla concert. Geekfest organizers observed the conflicts that arose between different musical subcultures with a bemused detachment.

The length of the concerts (sometimes eight hours or more) and the inconsistent quality of the acts made Geekfest less like a traditional concert and more like a weird carnival. Since the schedule was never listed, it was difficult for people to show up to see one band in particular. People tended to stay for most of the day and began to come as much for the playful atmosphere as for the bands.

Several Geekfest organizers, including Dan Abbott and Dylan McPuke, were affiliated with the Amtgard live action role-playing game, and brought homemade foam-padded swords for attendees to battle with during concerts. From then on, random foam sword battles were an integral part of Geekfest. Between bands, organizers held costume contests, raffles, and trivia games, usually with a nod to traditionally geeky themes like Dungeons & Dragons, "Weird Al" Yankovic, or Atari games.

Gradually, Geekfest attracted a community of disparate individuals, and become something of a scene itself. Several bands made inroads in to the Gilman scene, and several Geekfests were eventually held within the Gilman club itself.

In 1997, the Geeks (as SPAM/Geekfest organizers had come to be known) decided to celebrate the first anniversary of Geekfest by having a three-day campout. After a frenzied search for an appropriate site, the Geeks found Lake Ladoga, part of East Park Reservoir near Maxwell, California. It was hot, dusty, and inhospitable land under jurisdiction of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), and the lake was a man-made body used for irrigation of nearby farms. The water was noticeably filthy, but the 107 °F heat made it a welcome respite regardless. Organizers arranged the stage so that attendees could watch the bands from the relative comfort of the lake. The attendance was estimated at around 150-200 people. Drug use was rampant, mostly psychedelics, with ubiquitous drinking during the daytime. Organizers, using kitchen equipment borrowed from Food Not Bombs, fed everyone two free meals a day: gruel in the morning, spaghetti at night. BLM supervisor Bill Bird objected to the concert, but was overruled by the Sheriff and local merchants, who were happy for the increased business. In the end, nearly 40 bands performed at the Geekfest Anniversary, and the Geeks immediately began planning the next year's festival.

In the intervening year, SPAM organizers had found a kindred spirit, show promoter and artist Marcus Da Anarchist, who organized "Pirate Punx Picnics" out of San Francisco's Mission District. SPAM and the Pirate Punx collaborated on the next campout, dubbing it "Pirates vs Geeks". John Geek (by this time known as John Geek) and Marcus each booked half the bands.

For the third anniversary, the Pirates and Geeks resumed an uneasy alliance, organizing a week-long Libertatia, after the anarchist pirate utopia on Madagascar founded by Captain Mission during the 1700s. It was also referred to as the "Week of Geek". As it had been before, it was free and all-ages, and organizers fed the roughly 400 attendees two meals a day. Although 100 bands were booked, only 82 showed up to perform. Still, each day of entertainment lasted from approximately noon until 10 P.M. or 11 P.M. Several Bay Area journalists also attended, and the event received coverage in local press.

The demise of SPAM Records (closely linked to the breakup of flagship band Bobby Joe Ebola and the Children MacNuggits) spelled the end of Geekfests, though the Pirate Punx continue to organize Libertatia annually."

Writing about Bobby Joe Ebola and the Children MacNuggits a few months back in this column seemed to generate a small wave of nostalgia from people who were involved in, or witness to, SPAM Records and Geekfest. One detailed letter from Philip Knowles (printed in the last issue of *MRR*), in particular, chronicled the experience of booking a show in Portland for the bizarrely-conceived (and barely attended) Geekfest tour, which lumped twelve bands into an aging school bus to tour up and down the west coast playing all-ages, free shows…but that is the subject of an entire column in itself. Anyway, Geekfest is ten years old this year, and by the time this is printed we will have had a 10-year anniversary weekend at the end of August with way too many bands. In the continued spirit of this weird thing, however, I am now gonna present a how-to guide for doing ridiculous DIY—written by yours truly in 1998. Enjoy?

A "HOW-TO" GEEKFEST PRIMER
(circa 1998)

So, what's the process I've went through for this thing, you may ask? At least in theory, it's fairly easy. However, actual application of these steps can contain an infinite number of variables, and I'm sure you'll come up with better ways of dealing with them than I have. I've put these in the order which I generally do them in, using the relatively trouble-free shows as an example. There is also an extra page attached to this which contains current info, specific examples, and a little sample of my bullshit reasons and hypocritical ethics [not shown in this *MRR* reprint]. Fortunately, this page is separate and easily removed, so you can do another version of this with your own specific examples, bullshit reasons, and hypocritical ethics. Remember, this is just the way I have done the Geekfest, and is only intended as a *working example* of a show—not a template or guide. If you do exactly what you want, you'll feel a lot better about doing it more than once. If you don't, it's gonna get boring really quickly. Good luck.

1) **Find a location.** This is a royal pain in the ass oftentimes. Once you find a space, be sure to assess its possibilities for one-time/repeated use. A number of factors enter into this, including (but not limited to): Accessibility, legality/police apathy, proximity to neighbors (anyone in the area who may complain), parking, and a good-sized *flat* music area (the "stage") with some space around it for your audience of delinquents to look on. If it looks like you can pull it off illegally, I heartily recommend doing so. If not, legal permits may be an option.

Permits are a difficult proposition for those of limited means. If you are getting them, you should check with the city's Parks and Recreation department about a use permit. Often pricey (but sometimes not too bad), permits unfortunately carry the hidden tag of insurance with them, especially if you are using a public space. The standard of insurance coverage for a 50-350 person-attended show is a five million dollar policy, which translates into at least $200 in costs for insurance alone plus whatever other permit costs are incurred. They are also going to ask what you are going to do for security, and to them this means hired security. *If you're going to get a permit, it's generally a good idea to look into at least two months in advance of the planned event date.* Also, keep in mind that if you apply for a permit and fail, and try to do the show anyway, they're gonna be watching you.

2) **Pick a date.** It makes the most sense to pick one around a month-and-a-half to two months in advance if you really want a well-organized show. Be sure to set what hours you want the show to run, as well. This will help a lot in planning the band times, etc…Factors to consider could include the weather/season, other shows that day, availability of bands you want to have play, etc. At this point it is good to make a tentative (blank) schedule. *For large shows, a nicely stress-inducing guideline is a 15-minute setup time between bands,* assuming they don't have any super-weird equipment or anything – you'll find that out later.

3) **Book yer bands/circus acts/ poets/frisbee-catching dogs/whatever.** It generally makes the most sense to *book the acts you really want and the headliners first*. After that's taken care of, then fill up the rest of the schedule with, well, the rest. When you talk to each band, be sure to find out if they have any time restrictions that day, any equipment problems, any transportation problems, how many members they have, how long they take to set up, and how long of a set they have (a lot of the time bands only have 15 minutes worth of material, and you can plan your schedule accordingly). Even though you may not have solutions to any of these problems, at least you know that they're there, and knowing is half the battle. It's good to know that you're going to be a nervous wreck.

4) **Find a PA.** Renting a PA can be pricey, depending on whom you rent from. If you have

any soundperson friends with systems, just ask 'em how much they'd charge to do a show for you. If rental is out of your range, try to cobble a PA (and speakers) together out of various peoples' stuff or borrow one from a nice band. Of course, you'll also need several mics—generally at least three, with mic stands and cords. *Make sure the mic cords are compatible with the PA—many PA's have only XLR inputs (for the mic cords with the three little prongs in the end) while a lot of mic cords have only 1/4" inch outputs (like a guitar cord).* There are converters for these, easily stolen from Radio Shack. Also remember: *a PA is useless if no one knows how to operate it.* Try to find a soundperson who can show up early and stay late (utterly worthy of oral sex and good drugs) or two people, one of whom can relieve the other at a predetermined point. Most people are somewhat anal about their PA equipment. Take good care of it.

5) **Get some security and other help.** Some random stoner or punk kid will look a lot more like security if you slap a shirt on his/her back that says "Security" and have him/her help out in making sure things are run smoothly. They should be ready to break up fights, enforce venue restrictions, and just be a subtle yet definite presence throughout the show—*Not be a cop.* If your show is illegal, and the real cops show up, these are often the best people to send to talk to them. If you are doing your show legally, you'll likely have to have paid, uniformed security working as well. If you have friends with guard cards, definitely ask them to help. It also helps a lot just to have a few people around to do various tasks such as running door, finding bands, stage managing, running errands, etc.

6) **If you are doing an outdoor show** (or a show with no electricity available): find a generator. You will need at least 3500 watts to run a smallish sound system, preferable 5000+ watts. Some generators are incredibly efficient, running for a long time on one tank of gas. The more you are pushing the maximum wattage limit, the worse its efficiency will be. Be sure to bring oil (check with the owner about what type, most 2-stroke engines use 10/40 weight) and some extra cans of gas (check what type with the owner). Generators are around $100 per day from Big 4 and places like that for a 5000 watt model. *If you plan on doing shows regularly, investing in a generator is not a bad idea.* You can get a 5000 watt Briggs and Stratton engine from most big hardware warehouse stores (and Costco) for about $500-$600. They run well.

7) **Do your promotion.** There are many different methods of promoting a show, obviously. A few decent ones: Make a cool flyer. Do press releases to local papers' music listings (at least one month in advance). Tell everyone you know. Tell them to tell everyone they know. Give stacks of flyers to the various bands who are playing. Assemble a mailing list, and use it. Use the fuck out of the internet. A note to the wise: if your show is illegal, and you are aggressively promoting it, use the *rave* tactic—get an information phone line, and put that on your flyers. As much as they are reviled, ravers are the *masters* of guerilla show tactics. Don't let the police harsh your mellow, dude.

8) **Have your schedule ready to go, and check with everyone (i.e., bands, security, helpers, soundperson, etc.) beforehand to make certain that all your well-laid plans are going to go smoothly.** Then, at least, if all your plans go to shit, you have a better chance of knowing about it in advance. Some other random things to check on may include: Extension cords/power strips, lights (if your show is at least partially at night or indoors), food/drink, pens/paper, vehicles for transporting all this crap, caffeine, some extra money (just in case), sunblock (if the show is outdoors during the day), a watch, and patience.

9) **Incredibly important step that I left out like the complete imbecile I am** (you fill in the blank here):

Thanks for having the guts to actually do something. D.I.Y. = Life.

—Johnny Geek, P.O. Box 3026, Oakland, Ca. 94609. johngeek@gmail.com, online archive of old NO columns at www.myspace. com/noarchive

Kay and I are standing on the broad sidewalk in front of a department store complex on Avenue du Maine, a little south of Rue Vercingétorix. It's a brilliant October morning in Paris, warm with what Americans call Indian summer. Kay's a photographer, and we'd just purchased a couple of small picture books from the Cartier-Bresson gallery on Impasse Lebouis, next to a kindergarten schoolyard full of children. Our destination is now the Pompidou Center, and various photographic museums in the Marais.

I have my well-worn Paris Pratique folded to the 14th Arrondissement, in search of the Montparnasse-Bienvenue Metro station, squinting a little because the detail is so fine. I like maps, and the durable, navy blue Pratique is an amazing instrument. The 11.5 x 17.5 centimeter size fits handily in the back pocket of a pair of jeans. Combine it with an Orange Transportation Card, and it's all you need to navigate the City of Light.

A distinguished older gentleman, clearly French, approaches us. "Bonjour monsieur, madame. Ça va?" he greets us, his face serious. We both politely answer: "Bonjour monsieur. Ça va. Et vous?" keeping our expressions attentive. "Ça va," he says. Then, in heavily accented English he asks: "Are you in need of direction?" I relay our desire to find Montparnasse-Bienvenue station to catch the Metro to Hotel de Ville and the Pompidou. He gives us a quick set of directions, gesturing with his hands. We thank him, exchange farewell bonjours and au revoirs, and he walks briskly away.

"Ah, those incredibly rude, unhelpful French," I stage whisper to Kay.

It's our running joke. Invariably, we find the French generally, and Parisians in particular, helpful and obliging. They are quite formal of course. If you're willing to abide by the formalities however, and at least attempt to speak the language, the French are usually quite willing to assist. Mind you, they don't do this out of friendliness because, as a rule, the French aren't very friendly people. Rather, they act out of civility. If a stranger demonstrates, by adhering to various protocols, the willingness to engage in a civilized (*i.e.* French) conversation, the French in turn feel obliged to politely respond.

We're walking to the Metro station, following the man's directions, when he approaches us once again. We do another abbreviated round of greetings before he tells us that his wife thinks the Metro will be insufferable on such a warm day. She recommends we take the 58 bus to the Hotel de Ville for a more enjoyable trip and he points out the bus stop across the boulevard. We thank him, then part with the appropriate goodbyes. He and his wife are right, of course. The Paris Metro is an incredible subway system for traveling around the city, though not necessarily very comfortable on a warm day like this. As for the bus, I don't know what impresses me most, the elevated, scenic ride through the heart of Paris on a stunning autumn day or the way the driver expertly maneuvers around crazed Parisian drivers, aggressive pedestrians, and crooked streets that seem Medievally narrow. From this day on we take buses as well as the Metro around the city.

Like the French, New Yorkers have a reputation for being brusque and rude. It's also largely a myth. I can remember half a dozen times standing on a New York street with a map unfolded, trying to decipher how to get somewhere, when some local comes up and asks: "So, where do you want to go?" New Yorkers don't do this to be friendly, either. Rather, it's a matter of "I know this city like the back of my hand" pride that motivates them to give directions to a stranger. Actually, the most unhelpful people I've run across are San Franciscans. I visited the Bay Area frequently before moving up here, and often stood on busy San Francisco streets, map in hand, puzzling over how to find a particular location. The locals all hurried past me, eyes averted, unwilling even to acknowledge my presence. The only man who approached me asked, with a perfect Brooklyn accent: "So, where do you want to go?"

Don't get me wrong. I love the Bay Area. I moved here from San Diego over fifteen years ago to escape a claustrophobically conservative environment. I enjoyed my eleven years in sunny, multiracial Oakland, and I've had a great time living South of Market in San Francisco for

the past four plus years. San Franciscans though can be incredibly snooty—more accurately, arrogant—from snidely referring to the East Bay as East Berlin during the Cold War to calling where they live the City.

I'm not talking about whether San Francisco is a friendly or unfriendly town. Friendliness has nothing to do with it. The idea that we should all try to get along and like each other, or worse, that we should all love one another, is a tried-and-true recipe for disaster. I can't imagine a more horrendous tyranny than to insist that people help one another out of friendliness. I'm much more interested in the socially defined ways people are obliged to get along, whether or not they like each other. My travelogue above illustrated how people help others, not from wanting to be friendly, but out of pride or civility. The most extreme example of this type of thing is the role that hospitality plays among the Bedouin. In the harsh, life-or-death environment of the desert, the Bedouin is honor-bound to provide hospitality, even if invoked by a blood enemy.

I hitchhiked in Yugoslavia with my girlfriend in 1974, when there still was a Yugoslavia. We came into the country at night, by train from Thessaloniki to Skopje, in a compartment with a well-to-do Serbian family who fed us picnic-style and regaled us in broken English about the fun to be had in their hometown, Belgrade. Our plan was to switch trains in Skopje, get to the Adriatic, then hitchhike from Dubrovnik to Ljubljana, along one of the most beautiful coastlines in the world.

Our first problem was that the train station's ticket office was closed. We spent the night huddled with hundreds of other passengers in several waiting rooms, where I witnessed a pickpocket in action between fitful bouts of light sleep.

Our second problem occurred when the ticket office opened an hour before sunrise. It was then we learned there was no direct train to the coast. A man waiting in line knew a smattering of English, enough to translate what the ticket master told us, using a Yugoslavian map provided by the station as an aid. Trains running into the Dinara Mountains served the economy of an extremely rural countryside, stopping at every village along the way, which meant that it would take a couple of months to reach the Dalmatian Coast by train. Seeing the consternation on our faces, the man in line suggested we take a bus directly to Titograd (present-day Podgorica). But when it came to giving us directions to the bus station, and without a map of Skopje, his efforts to communicate failed. Instead, the man shrugged and indicated we should follow him.

He became our third problem.

For, although he led us to the bus station, he also purchased a ticket and accompanied us on our ride to Titograd. Talk about taking direction-giving a bit far. He did guide us through finding something to eat and a place to relieve ourselves in a mist-enshrouded mountain village halfway along our trip. And once in Titograd, despite warning us not to associate with the colorfully-clad Albanian kids who ran up to us offering us a place to stay (he called them "gypsy thieves"), he found us a premium hotel that was incredibly cheap. The rest of the time though, he tried asking us questions about America in what little English he knew, and we tried to answer him as best we could not knowing any Serbo-Croatian. We didn't understand his questions half the time, and he didn't understand our answers most of the time.

Okay, maybe problem is too strong a word. He wasn't obnoxious or aggressive, he never asked us for money, and he dropped us off at the hotel with a smile and wave. We would have totally freaked had he been waiting for us in the morning, but he wasn't. No doubt, the man had been a sincere Good Samaritan—curious about America with a lot of time on his hands. We considered his actions excessively friendly however, and paranoid warning signals went off in our minds. We were traveling in a Communist country after all. Yugoslavia wasn't aligned with Moscow, and it practiced a degree of workers self-management in its economy, which interested me about the country. Yet Yugoslavia was also an avowed Marxist-Leninist regime (read: one-party police state) and it was the height of the Cold War.

Yeah, right. As if the Yugoslavian secret police had any interest in a couple of hippie kids. Still, we were leery of someone who started out giving us directions, and ended up escorting us to our destination halfway across the country.

This sense of directions gone awry was atmospheric at best; a vague feeling never corroborated by facts. We were suspicious of the guy helping us simply because he was being a little too friendly. Not an uncommon reaction, I might add. We are all wary of folks we perceive as blowing smoke up our ass. Despite religious edicts to love thy neighbor and befriend the stranger, people are often rightly suspicious of too much friendliness. Yet it is an absolutely essential feature of social existence that people help one another. Society cannot exist without a minimum of cooperation between its members. Hence the conscription of other motives—civility, pride, honor—into aiding our fellow humans.

As you can tell, I think that friendliness is highly overrated. I consider bleeding heart do-gooders—who fervently believe that the world's problems can be solved if we all just sit down, communicate, understand each other, and become friends—to be incredibly naïve. Paul Jacobs, a socialist anti-Zionist Jew, once commented that when he actually sits down to talk to his enemies, he discovers that they are the sons of bitches he always suspected they were. Touching ever so briefly on one aspect of the current Middle East conflagration, I'm impressed by individuals like Israeli writer Amos Oz who call for a two-state solution to the Israeli/Palestinian conflict, not as some utopian panacea, but as a "peace of clenched teeth." Clearly, we have to find ways to live together on this planet, even if we don't particularly like each other.

PERSONAL PROPAGANDA... To find out my real name purchase my book, *End Time*, from AK Press (POB 40682, SF, CA 94140-0682) for $10. The book is called *Fim* in Portuguese and can be ordered from Conrad Editora (R. Maracaí, 185, Aclimação, 01534-030, São Paulo-SP, Brasil) for R$ 24,90. I can be contacted at hooligentsia@mac.com.

New York's Alright...

A couple of Sundays ago my work flew me out to New York. The project I was working on took about 2 1/2 weeks, which gave me some quality time to walk around in the City and check out the sights. Like most hardcore nerds, I spent most of my time trying to find out where BREAKDOWN[i] played in Tompkins Square Park, or trying to locate the old A7 Club where the BAD BRAINS used to perform. I also explored the inside of CBGBs for the first time, and was surprised at how small it was. Everything looks much bigger when you're watching a 13th generation VHS tape of STRAIGHT AHEAD and WARZONE playing there in the '80s. I walked around the Lower East Side for awhile trying to picture what it was like 20 years ago before all the homeless people and junkies disappeared. Speaking of which, NYC has the least amount of homeless people that I have ever seen in a major metropolitan city. In the entire 2 1/2 weeks that I was in New York, *one* person asked me for spare change. I encountered only one person violently screaming nonsense at the top of his lungs, and he was quickly silenced with a punch to the face from a 50-year-old lady. I know San Francisco has one of the worst homeless problems in the county, but it was a culture shock to walk around in a busy commercial area like Greenwich Village and not be approached. What the hell happened to all of them? Where are all the doomsday crazies and apocalyptic preachers with sandwich boards spouting off about the end of the world? Maybe they're all afraid of that old lady.

When I wasn't trying to find the old location of Some Records, I took the time to appreciate the present day amenities of the city. I'd like to take this space to thank *MRR* head honcho, Golnar, who was nice enough to write me an extensive list of the punk must-visits. She pretty much had everything covered from killer vegetarian/vegan restaurants to all the record stores worth visiting.

Here are some NYC highlights:

Brick Oven Galeria – This restaurant is located in Williamsburg, Brooklyn. It is well worth the subway ride and short walk to Havemeyer street, where an unassuming dining area houses an amazing painting of Don Corleone from the *Godfather* saying "I'll make you a pizza you can't refuse." I am not lying when I say this pizza is

some of the best I have ever tasted. If you must go to Williamsburg, then this place is a must for all you non-vegans. It's a 10/10.

Koronet's Pizza – This place is located in Uptown Manhattan near Columbia University. As far as taste goes, this place gets a satisfactory 6/10. But it is worth mentioning just for how effing big the slices are. A Koronet slice of cheese set me back $2.75, and it was at least three times bigger than any other slice of pizza I have ever seen. They practically cut the pie in quarters! If you are a punk on a budget, or you want to feed yourself and two friends, then Koronet's is your place.

Red Bamboo – If you've been vegetarian/vegan for any length of time, then you already know about this utopia of fake BBQ steak hoagies and vegan Philly cheesesteaks. I went there at least seven times. It's that good.

Old Devil Moon – This place had the best biscuits & veggie gravy I have ever tasted. I think this place was on 12 St and Avenue A.

Kate's Joint – Kate's has an extensive list of "greasy spoon" diner type food that can all be made vegan upon request. The vegan chili cheese dog will treat you right.

Academy Annex – Once you've waded through the sea of track-bike warriors, and neo-bohemian folk people, there is a great record store in Williamsburg called Academy Annex on North 6th Street. The great selection of hardcore and punk was good enough that I was able to overlook the condescending staff who were horribly unaccommodating, even by independent record store standards. But like I said, I picked up a sweet Finnish hardcore comp EP that I have yet to see anywhere else.

...If You like Saxophones

Academy Annex wasn't the only cool place I visited in Williamsburg. I also went to a great show at a club called North Sixth, which was also on North 6th Street (coincidentally). I went there originally to catch ANNIHILATION TIME, but unfortunately I only got to catch (literally) the club owner's glasses being slapped off his face by ANNIHILATION TIME's drummer. This got them kicked off the bill. Luckily, the night wasn't a total bust. Before the ANNIHILATION TIME debacle, a Philadelphia band by the name of CLOCKCLEANER played, and blew me the fuck away. Come to find out, longtime crony and long distance urinator, Sharkey, is the singer/guitarist of this abrasive mess. It took me awhile to recognize him when he approached me before their set, as he must have lost at least 60 pounds since I last saw him in 2001. He assured me that they were going to play nothing but slow songs to piss off the crowd, which wasn't as abusive as say, playing along side two strobe lights pointed directly at the crowd, which rendered them impossible to look at once the lights went off. I have yet to listen to their first release on Manic Ride, but their new full length *Nevermind* is one big, beautiful clusterfuck of Steve Albini worship mixed with all the good parts of DC's THE MONORCHID. There is even a saxophone on one of the tracks. This CD, as well as their single with the CRUCIFUCKS cover, hasn't left my stereo in a month.

Where the Youngsters get Hyphy

I couldn't fill this *entire* column up with my good times on the other coast without reminding you that the Bay Area always reigns supreme. I have not forgotten that New York City can't make a descent burrito to save it's life, that the humidity there turns people into huge assholes, and they don't have PELIGRO SOCIAL. PELIGRO SOCIAL is a new, up and coming punk band from the Bay Area has been smashing up local shows for the last few months. So far their vinyl output is just above satisfactory, but their live shows are unparalled as far as classic Fowl era, Bay Area punk is concerned. These guys look and sound like the real deal.

Another band that I just can't talk enough about is LOOK BACK AND LAUGH. After returning from their USA tour to support their new single on Deranged, you think they would have slowed down a little. We just got to play with these guys at 58 Tehama a few nights back, and they were as fresh and energetic as the first time I saw them. I hope I never get tired of seeing this band live.

After listening to a demo with no cover for months, I finally received a cassette with song titles and contact info from a band of young Bay Area miscreants by the name of WAR KRIME. This 14-track cassette contains both the aforementioned demo, as well an advance of their new EP, which according to the liner notes is being released by No Way Records. As much as I hate to admit it, all of these songs are pretty fucking good. The recording is perfect, and the vocals have a very manic, URBAN WASTE-like quality to them. Don't sleep on these Bay Area unknowns, and order this demo by writing WAR KRIME at 146 Trinidad Dr., Tiburon, CA 94920.

I can be reached at ih8thekids@gmail.com.

Top Ten of October

CLOCKCLEANER Nevermind CD
CLOCKCLEANER live at North Six
SEX VID EP (great blown out guitar tone!)
PELIGRO SOCIAL live
YOUNG OFFENDERS live (in theory)
LOOK BACK AND LAUGH live at 58 Tehama
WAR KRIME demo + advanced EP cassette
GO IT ALONE live at Gilman
NEVER HEALED 12"
WRECKING CREW Balance of Terror CD

War and Peace

August 3, 2006

Sitting at a café before work, pounding out a few words over coffee. As someone once told me, "the Mission smells like donuts, burritos, and piss."

How true, but this place is filled with music and cheerful voices, the sun is bright, and a San Francisco cool summer breeze waltzes in through the open door. It's a break from the chilly fog days, and the sidewalks are bustling, everyone out enjoying the day. And in this picture-postcard scene, I'm wearing all black. I can't help but remain an east coast oil spot among California flowers.

And once again, my friends, my head is filled with recent travels, war, capitalists, and death. The music roars and the four horsemen ride on, following the scent of blood.

July 21, 2006

It's been almost a year since I was in Tennessee.

This time last year I saw my grandfather in the hospital, and a month from now, a year ago, I stood by his grave. It was a surreal scene, that day in August, in an old southern cemetery. My great-grandparents are also buried there, the name Ransom carved in a large old family stone. A single piece of ancient granite, immovable as time, representing both my past and future. There lay three previous generations, and my own eventual end. Mortality is a reminder to live grandly in the present.

It is past midnight, and I'm in my old room in my mom's house, trying not to fall into the past, which surrounds me like stale air. Outside my window it is pitch black, with a silhouette of trees. A freight train horn punctures the silence, traveling on the other side of the river. Steel wheels turn over metal tracks, rolling cargo eastward towards Nashville.

Not a mile down the river, in 1862, the Civil War raged. In the Battle of Stones River two groups of men were set against each other by generals who fought over the critical supply line—the railroad. Two armies were set against each other by politicians, representing competing financial and power interests. About 81,000 men clashed on the battlefield, more souls than live in the nearby town of Murfreesboro today. In the battle's wake, entire fields were covered with dead horses, cannons, and cold corpses in the frost. After a week of fighting, more than 20,000 soldiers lay dead.

The lone train horn blows again, disappearing into the distance.

In the same old cemetery where my family is buried, there is a large ring of plain stones with a Confederate flag flying in the middle. This is a little-known spot that I discovered after a summer of doing research on the battle, my first foray into becoming an inquisitive journalist not satisfied with textbook histories.

This ring of stones is not just another Civil War monument, although it is unusual (and suspect) because it flies the Confederate flag. It is much more gruesome, a place not mentioned at the National Park where the tourists buy postcards and stone bullets.

About two thousand skulls lay beneath this patch of grass, their names forgotten and unknown. It is a mass grave, where the

Confederate soldiers were eventually buried. The Union soldiers lay in their own cemetery, built next to the railroad, the stars and stripes above. Ah, the glory of the soldier.

On both sides, on all sides, disposable bodies for the patriotic cause. Bones decay beneath bloody flags.

April 10, 2004

Last night I saw REACCION from Chicago play the House of Suffering basement in Boston. It was a good show, and the songs were fast and full of energy.

Before one of their last songs, Martha said something to the effect of, "We all need to take control over our own lives."

This connected with me, putting things in a different perspective. Perhaps not exactly as she meant it, but it got me thinking. It was a flash point. A summary of my rage and disconnect at the moment. It is a lack of power.

The war has been tearing at my heart and head.

There are moments when I find myself walking down the sidewalk in Central Square, on a lunch break from work, and catch the headlines from inside the newspaper boxes. I take in the familiar war photos of soldiers and dust. I take it in, and I can see it. I know that the horrors of war are going on this very minute, as I'm looking at that photo in the middle of the sidewalk, standing in the sun with a coffee in a paper cup in my hand, as people walk around me.

I am in two places at once, looking at Iraq from inside a newspaper box in Boston. On the other side of the glass there is rubble, and a dead man lying on a dirt road. There is the sound of gunshots and speeding cars. The image changes, and now I'm looking out into a hospital room. We have all seen the gruesome photos of injured children, their heads smashed and arms and legs mutilated or missing. These children with the deep sad eyes fill the room, and I hear a woman crying over her dead son.

I stand on a sidewalk in Boston, looking around me at the world I live in. A year since the beginning of "Operation Iraqi Freedom" began, the stores are open, and the cafes have put out their outdoor tables and umbrellas for the summer. I'm wearing my favorite red boots, and the red scarf my aunt gave me. People come in and out of the stairs to the subway, and a woman asks for change as they pass. The city is alive and cheerful, everything as usual. The window to Iraq is very small, just this newspaper box that I'm standing next to.

But I see the worlds as one. We are connected by blood and suffering.

This is where my feelings begin to twist, and I try to sort out my rage and sadness. This is where Maggie's words sparked a thought that seemed to summarize.

It comes down to a lack of power over our own lives.

Here then, is the crux of my current madness. Why I feel like reality is slipping, why I can't reconcile the two sides of the newspaper box.

I, and millions of other Americans, did not have the power to stop this war. I was not asked if I thought we should go to war. That was left up to two hundred politicians sitting in Congress and one raging President. They have the power and we, the people, are left with the consequences. It has always been this way.

Yet, *we the people are responsible.* Our taxes paid for the bullets and tanks, and our sons and daughters and friends and partners and parents were shipped off in uniform. Our everyday acts support the war, simply by allowing it to continue. (*Forty percent* of US taxes are spent on the military.) The state has usurped power, but we have also given that power up.

This is the crux of "the banality of evil." By not resisting, we become complicit in the crime.

December 17, 1998

[Another old journal entry. I travel through time. The names change and the story remains the same.]

Back in London, after an amazing weeklong bus trip through Ireland with my sister. There are so many cars and people, the commotion and noise and hustle of a big city assaulting my senses. I think of Galway, Cork, Schull, and Dingle. I miss the colors, the green, and the buildings that are with you, not giants sitting on your head. Here, there is so much is white. Stores are temples to themselves, and brands and logos everywhere.

Ha! Here I am, bitter with a thin smile and camera at the ready, standing in the empire's head. I chafe at all the ties, roped round the young men's necks, in the streets of Covent Garden. But there is more to think about than the change in scenery, and those bound to consumer culture.

Watching the small television in our hostel, the Baghdad sky is filled with popcorn lights, and American bombs are once again falling on Iraq tonight.

Annan is not the only one who is "sad and disappointed."

Tony Blair commits the British to help fight Saddam Hussein and his Weapons of Mass Destruction. France "thinks of the human consequences" and Canada declares "Hussein brought this upon himself." The Russians are outright pissed, as Iraq is at their back door, and fighting Saddam is not in their interests.

From the Pentagon, Shelton in his stars and stripes rattles on about warships, airplanes, strikes, and tempo. The catch phrase this time is "Desert Fox."

The timing is strange at the very least. President Clinton, the man behind the attack, who told the generals to go ahead, said that Saddam didn't keep his promise to let UN inspectors look around. Saddam might, if we don't act, "develop Weapons of Mass Destruction." It would be dangerous, for the US and the rest of the world, if we don't act now to stop him. Tomorrow, Clinton was to be judged, the beginning of his impeachment trial. But now the bombs explode.

Boom!

How exciting! Support the troops! See the lights flash on the TV screen. Where the hell is Iraq anyway? Near Florida, Maine, Texas, or Washington? No, Iraq is very far away, in the Middle East. In a place the US calls *oil and crazy Muslims*.

But Saddam didn't keep his promise!

"I did not have improper relations with that woman."

We can't allow Saddam to have those weapons! We've got to save the world! Germ warfare, nuclear bombs, he's got it all, we're sure. Saddam's a crazy Muslim Hitler bastard! Boom! Boom! Boom! Support the troops! Support the troops!

July 24, 2006

War comes again like rain.

This morning. Reading news about the most recent Israeli invasion of Lebanon. Reading at the kitchen table, staring at black and white bloody photos of the Sha'ita family, as they attempted to flee their village in southern Lebanon—but too late. An Israeli missile, dropped from a helicopter overhead, hit their minivan with the family inside. Sixteen people were injured, and three died, including the grandmother. But that is only one example of the carnage, as the bombing raids have intensified across southern Lebanon, targeting civilian cars, and blowing up homes, bridges, and infrastructure. Nearly 400 Lebanese have been killed, and many more have been injured. In retaliation, Hezbollah launched rockets into Israel, killing 36.

There are the usual quotes from government and Hezbollah officials, explaining in antiseptic and nationalistic terms how hurling bombs at people is a rational and necessary thing to do.

How can Bush support the attack as "Israeli's need to defend itself," with a straight face?

It is the same old game. The media and the people who want war present a false cause and effect, framing the debate so that blame falls onto the other side. Action is disguised as a reaction, a defensive operation.

In this instance, the Israeli attack is a response to the kidnapping of two Israeli soldiers. But what about the rest of history? What about events as recent as the day before?

As *Z Magazine* points out, on "June 24th, one day prior to the kidnapping of the Israeli soldier by 'Palestinian militants', Reuters reported that "elite [Israeli] commandos mounted Israel's first arrest raid into the Gaza Strip . . . since the Jewish state withdrew a year ago," detaining medical student Osama Muamar and his brother Mustafa, a university student. Israel said the two men were Hamas militants, though Hamas denies this and no evidence was presented. All that is firmly known is that Israel invaded sovereign territory and seized two civilians."

The US mass media simplifies and spins the story even more, and the slaughter is portrayed as "Israel fighting terrorists."

August 2, 2006

Sitting behind the counter at Bound Together Anarchist bookstore on Haight Street, doing my Wednesday morning shift. I'm listening to Carolyn's kick-ass radio show on KUSF, drinking coffee, sitting on a stool surrounded by hun-

dreds of radical books, enjoying the moment.

A group of people has just left, and the store is empty except for Ted, who is doing a training shift, sitting on the stool next to mine. So it seems a perfect time to look through my copy of *What is Anarchism?* by Alexander Berkman, to pick out phrases to quote here in my column, trying to explain why the US and other capitalist countries will always be at war.

May, 1929

[Again, traveling through time, reaching back to history. Berkman began his lifetime of Anarchist work around 1888, and was a leading writer, speaker, and organizer until his death in 1926. *The ABC of Anarchism* was published in its entirety in 1929. Below are excerpts.]

"You know what war means. Even if yourself have never been at the front, you know that there is no greater curse than war with its millions of dead and maimed, its countless human sacrifices, its broken lives, ruined homes, its indescribable heartache and misery…

"But there is one element of capitalist society for whom war is good. It is the element that coins money out of war that gets rich on your 'patriotism' and self-sacrifice. In short, it is the great lords of finance, industry, and commerce who alone benefit by war.

"For these war is a blessing. A blessing in more than one way. Because war also serves to distract the attention of the laboring masses from the everyday misery and turns it to 'high politics' and human slaughter. Governments and rulers have often sought to avoid popular uprising and revolution by staging a war. History is full of such examples."

"Take the World War, for instance…how did America get into the war when her people were expressly against it? Didn't they elect Wilson as President on the clear promise to keep the country out of war?

"In former days, under absolute monarchs, the subjects were simply compelled to obey the king's command. But that often involved resistance, and the danger of rebellion. In modern times there are surer and safer ways means of making the people serve the interests of their rulers. All that is necessary is to talk them into believing that it is in their own interests, good for their country, good for humanity. In this manner the noble and fine instincts of man are harnessed to do the dirty work of the capitalistic master class, to the shame and injury of mankind."

[What I find particularly chilling, is that our present rulers have used this technique to such amazing success, time and time again.]

"President Wilson invented a new device to snare the American people into the war for the benefit of Big Business. Woodrow Wilson, the former college president, discovered a 'war for democracy,' a 'war to end war.' With that hypocritical motto a countrywide campaign was started…Special laws were rushed through to stifle every free expression of opinion. Dire punishment was meted out to every objector…the nation-wide militarist propaganda at last swept the American people into the field of carnage."

"Think it over, my friend, and see what capital and government are doing for you, doing *to* you. Soon they will be calling on you to 'defend your country!'"

August 6, 2006

Today marks the 27th day of fighting between Israel and Hezbollah. So far the conflict has killed 92 people in Israel, including 35 civilians; in Lebanon, the death toll is at 716, most of them civilians.

In Baghdad today, bombs killed more than 60 people and wounded more than 200 in the northern oil center of Kirkuk.

Since the beginning of the Iraq war in 2003, an estimated 42,000 Iraqi civilians have been killed; and at least 2,590 members of the American military have died.

Here at home, about 13 million children are living in severe poverty in the US, while an estimated $100 billion dollars is being spent to continue the Iraq and Afghanistan wars. As always, the workers pay for war, and the poor suffer the most from its effects.

War does not happen by accident, or as the result of a few dramatic events (such as 9-11 or the kidnapping of two Israeli soldiers) as the propaganda would have us believe.

War does not happen for the benefit of workers. War does not make the world safer for anyone. War will not stop terrorists or create democracy. As Edwin Starr sang, "War. What is it good for? *Absolutely nothing*."

War is a continual product of capitalism, and necessary for those in government and finance to maintain their power and profits. And for how long will war continue? How long will we allow this system to function?

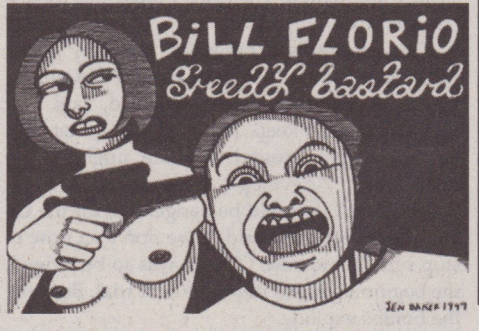
That, my friends, is for us to decide.

End Notes

Thanks for reading this ramble. Also, thanks to MRR. Good luck to all of us. Abolish the state, and fuck its wars. I dedicate this column to a relative of mine who lived in the hills of eastern Tennessee, who was shot in the back and left to die in the forest for refusing to be conscripted by the Confederate Army. Also to my Uncle Tim, who went to prison rather than going to Vietnam.

In Solidarity, Erika

e_bitchcrew@yahoo.com



People tend to use the word "jaded" a lot. It seems like I get called that sometimes. I must admit, I enjoy being something of a party pooper. When someone comes up to me proclaiming how brilliant something is, I love playing devil's advocate and explaining how it's a complete ripoff of something else, how it's been ruined by some other external factor, or any other smug negativity I feel like spewing. Now, to me this is just biased. Biased and jaded aren't the same thing. Let me give you an example.

I just talked to Joe from Don Giovanni Records about explaining the difference between being jaded and being biased, and it seems there's no real direct connection between the two except in my own mind. We did wholeheartedly agree that THE ERGS don't need to do any cover songs since their original songs are better than most of the music they actually want to cover. I was trying to explain how when they do a SCREECHING WEASEL cover, I'm biased because they only have one decent album. I'm not jaded enough to not give it a chance to be improved on, but you know, you just can't polish every turd.

OK, let's start over. Last month, solely on the premise that we were all asked to play a benefit for fellow columnist George Tabb, who's in a physical shambles of sorts, BUGOUT SOCIETY—the band I was a member of from 1990-1998—did a reunion show. I put it that way because after practicing we ran into Larry Livermore on the street and the information came out that I wasn't an original member, but had joined four years in. ("Well. I read Bill's columns and he always refers to it as *my band* BUGOUT SOCIETY.") This is going someplace, trust me.

Coincidently, after almost all of us agreed to play the show, GO! (now major label-affiliated but then just stupid exclamation-mark-after-band-name punk pioneers) another band of the same time and era and scene that we used to play with back in the day, was also doing a reunion at ABC No Rio in the same week. So it was a strange alignment of the stars. Hmmm, *stars* would be the wrong word. What else aligns…gun sights, rear tires?

The show was really fun and there were a lot of old memories and old feelings and old people who came back to the spot for a couple of hours. It sort of marked a fifteenth anniversary of the space as a punk rock venue. ABC No Rio, after struggling with the city for over ten years, has finally won ownership of the space from New York City. The other irony, of course, is that CBGB, the violent shows of which forced us to find a new place (not to mention hardly ever giving BOS or GO! good shows), is closing. ABC No Rio is the perfect place to find examples of being jaded, since so many people show up at ABC's door as blank slates ready for anything and leave ready to shun the world and find a new hobby.

I was talking with my friend Will Tarrant, (who's definitely not jaded—he does Chainsaw Safety Records, that puts out a lot of good, mostly local hardcore bands). Anyhow, Will was telling me a few weeks after the show that he doesn't feel the same bond with the space that I might, since I showed up early and moved cables and swept floors for however long a time it was. It made me think of the first show there

and what I came home with.

Most of the time I went to shows at CBGB, I went as a spectator. There wasn't really much opening for me to talk to people—not that most of them were very friendly. A lot of times I was going to shows with people just as out of the social loop as I was, and they were kids I didn't know very well either—shit; I think all of them had criminal records at 16. I started doing a zine right before CBGB stopped its weekly hardcore matinees, but it wasn't exactly well-received, considering it kinda sucked.

When I looked over that crowd of 30 or so people at the first ABC No Rio matinee, the thought going through my head was that every single person there was directly involved with making something. There was, say, Fred Alva—who did a record label—along with members of bands, makers of zines, people that took photos at shows to put in zines, guys who sold records out of boxes on tables, etc. There really weren't any spectators; everyone contributed in some way. A voice in the back of my head, which seemed to be common sense, said, "How can this really be a show if no real fans showed up?" But now I feel the opposite. "How can someone show face at a punk show with nothing to show for their efforts but a smudgy stamp on their hand?"

So—getting back to being jaded—how could I be jaded if I go to shows three times a week? If I set shows up, if I write this crap, and play in my bands, and do my best to keep things moving? Just because I have high standards for entertainment and like to burst a bubble here and there doesn't explain why all the bad bands and zines that usually are strung together with bad attitudes don't break my desire to keep doing it. I mean, spending countless amounts of time and money because something feels right makes up for the snarky comments I like to make about things that feel wrong. And really, the funny thing is, the basic string that holds all this together is dislike for the world as it is. So really, who's jaded?

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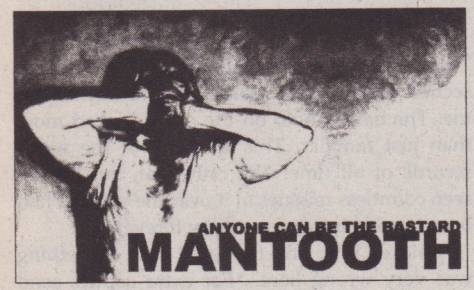

COLD AS ICE!!!

In my column, I may come off as some kind of narcissistic prick or egomaniacal brute. I'll be the first to admit that I have some trouble *not* starting my introductions in the first person. I can admit to not being perfect. The nature and origin of my various mental failings is perhaps more interesting than the manifestations thereof. But I can admit to having a *problem*.

The problem is not with alcohol. Nor is it with drugs or sex. My problem cannot be ingested, shot up, or fucked. It's a problem that many MRR readers and staffers may be dealing with themselves. It's seldom spoken of and those in need of treatment are often labeled as "crazy" or as "lacking self control." Unfortunately, there is no clinic or therapy that deals with *mincecore*.

For those unfamiliar with the term, the genre "mincecore" is played and was coined by the band Agathocles. Hailing from Belgium, the band has been "mincing" since the late '80s and has released a staggering, if not nauseating, amount of records—probably upwards of 200, most of them being split seven-inches. If you find yourself wondering how one band could produce so much material, the answer is simple; it's easy to produce shit. Shocking as it may be, the quality of most Agathocles releases may not appear on any scale even remotely labeled "good." I once boasted that I would embark on what I called "the Agathocles Challenge," a grueling battle against rational thought and my own bank account, wherein I would try to track down and own the entire Agathocles catalogue. I was young and naïve. I didn't know what I was getting into. It seemed like all my friends were doing it. I just wanted to fit in.

I never even came close to success, but I did learn a lot of things during that time. Unfortunately, I can't remember any of those things because the same part of your brain that is responsible for common sense and memory is also in charge of keeping you from spending your hard-earned money on another shitty Agathocles record. So I had to sacrifice one part for the other.

So there is a significant lapse in my memory over a certain number of months, during which I may have done and said things that I regret. This was well before my time writing for *MRR*, so I can't excuse the past two years of shitty columns on Agathocles.

Case in point: I was purging my record collection recently when I came across a seven-inch that I had never seen before; nor do I remember ever buying it. It's an Agathocles record with nothing but a photo of a polar bear on the cover. The title is "Cold as Ice." It's a split seven-inch with PP7 Gaftzeb and the Calypso Queerleaders, which I'll get to later.

Since I had absolutely no recollection of ever buying this record, I decided to save it from the sale pile and give it a quick listen, expecting the usual low-fi "mincecore," AKA "shitty grindcore." What's etched into that wax is probably more brutal and more terrifying than any grindcore release to date or ever will be. It sounds like Jan and the boys tried to do some sort of Godflesh/industrial-type song, but instead it turned it into a mid-paced techno jam about wanting to be a polar bear. The part about "wanting to be a polar bear" is not lyrical interpretation: COLD AS ICE / COLD AS ICE / POLAR BEAR / **I WANNA BE A POLAR BEAR** / IN THE COLD NORTH POLE / **SO I DON'T HAVE TO CRY ANYMORE** / BECAUSE EVERYTHING BECOMES SO CLEAR / POLAR BEARS DON'T HAVE TO CRY

If you think that reading that might have damaged your nervous system in some way, just think how hard it was to type it out, let alone listen to it. I wasn't quite sure what happened to me in those first few minutes, but I'm pretty sure my sperm count was lowered due to being struck in the balls by such a weighty mass of insanity/idiocy. I kind of stood there for a minute, not really sure what to do or what was going on. The insert told me to "play this piece fucking loud and feel the cold!" so I did just that. I didn't feel any noticeable temperature change, but I did feel the pain that wrestles within Agathocles's heart—the desire to transform into a polar bear. I figured that if I were a polar bear, I would be nowhere near this record and would stop crying because I couldn't fucking remember buying this record.

Or maybe Agathocles is a bunch of furries.

The flipside didn't make me feel much better. "Maybe I bought it for PP7 Gaftzeb and the Calypso Queerleaders?" I thought. I don't even know how to describe what the hell was going on there. All I know is that cowbells, maracas, flutes, steel drums, slide guitars, and tambourines were involved. Someone was also credited as playing some instrument called "door closing." Congratulations, Nicklas Lindth, you are a virtuoso on the door. They also stick it to the man by "not thanking" "non-Swedish type font of Microsoft USA."

The plot sickens: the Agathocles/PP7 Gaftzeb and the Calypso Whatevers came out in 1997 on some label called TPOS, which you can reach through Trash American Style. The same label that put out this gem also released various Charles Manson spoken-word cassettes, but also the Reverend Jim Jones "Mass Suicide" cassette, which they describe as "low-fi and scary." And if you're not in the market for a David Koresh "last sermon" cassette, you could also pick up The Pist's "Destroy the Boathouse" cassette.

I decided not to sell this record, but instead mounted it on my wall so that I might always remember the day my innocence died.

ENDNOTES:
-Not *all* Agathocles records are bad. Some are actually pretty decent. Seriously.
-Agathocles can tell me to fuck off at: gregory.mantooth@gmail.com

Each summer, America's financial elite head for the Hamptons. But bold men who lust for power have an agenda far more ambitious than the seduction of Botox babes at cocktail parties where grown men wear pastels. They go where the real action is: the former Soviet republic of Kazakhstan, home to the world's largest

untapped oil reserves.

Dick Cheney has been spending a lot of time in the huge Central Asian republic, so much so that its windswept steppes have become his new Secret Undisclosed Location. Mostly the Acting President hangs out in Kazakhstan's landlocked hinterlands wooing a reviled dictator, the only ruler the nation has known since being evicted by the USSR in 1991. Thanks in part to more than $50 million a year in US taxpayer money and ever-soaring bundles of military aid, Cheney hopes to secure "total energy dominance" via lucrative oil pipeline deals on behalf of GOP-connected energy companies.

Cheney is also sending a terrible message to the world's most repressive regimes: the United States still cares more about oil than democracy.

The Bush Administration has unleashed a full-court press of shuttle diplomacy in an effort to keep Nursultan Nazarbayev out of the orbit of Russia and China, America's rivals in the region. On May 5, Cheney appeared in the capital city of Astana with Nazarbayev at his side, hailing Kazakhstan's supposed political and economic liberalization. Declaring the police state America's "strategic partner," the veep invited Nazarbeyev to the White House this September for an official state visit with Bush—an honor recently denied to the president of China on human rights grounds. "I think the [Kazakh] record speaks for itself," Cheney said.

Indeed it does.

Kazakh opposition leader Galymzhan Zhakiyanov was scheduled to meet with Cheney in Astana. "I wanted to tell him about the problems we've faced building freedom and democracy here in Kazakhstan," he said, "and I wanted to remind Cheney of what President Bush said in his second inauguration speech—that the freedom and prosperity of citizens in the US depends on the freedom and democracy of other countries in the world." But he never got to deliver that message, having been arrested by Kazakhstan's notorious *militsia* military police. Cheney didn't make a peep about Zhakiyanov's missed appointment.

"In reality," reports the *Chicago Tribune*, "most analysts agree Kazakhstan remains an authoritarian regime where opposition parties are banned without cause, independent media outlets are routinely shut down, and corruption is rife throughout the government. In recent months, merely belonging to the opposition movement has become dangerous. Two prominent critics of the Kazakh government have been found shot to death since last fall. The death of one of those men, Zamanbek Nurkadilov, was ruled a suicide even though he had been shot three times, twice in the chest and once in the head."

Nurkadilov's body was discovered shortly after Bush wrote Nazarbayev to ask him "to make sure that economic reforms are backed up with bold democratic reforms" in time for the upcoming 2005 presidential election. Even though Nazarbayev won a Saddam-esque 91 percent of the vote in polling universally declared fraudulent by international observers, Bush didn't say a word.

After the "election," the bodies of outspoken former minister Altynbek Sarsenbaev and four members of his Nagyz Ak Zhol Party, reported Radio Free Europe, "were discovered on a desolate stretch of road outside Almaty on February 13, [2006], their bodies riddled with bullets and their hands bound behind their backs." As I write in my upcoming book about US involvement in Central Asia, *Silk Road to Ruin: Is Central Asia the New Middle East?*, the Kazakh NSC (former KGB) "pinned the blame on Erzhan Utembaev, a former deputy prime minister then serving as head of administration of the Kazakh Senate, but political opponents and some *militsia* sources say Nazarbayev personally paid sixty thousand dollars to have him silenced." Again, there was no condemnation from the White House.

Cheney showed up to kiss up less than three months after the killings. The Bush Administration, hoping to convince the ruthless Nazarbayev to join its US-backed Baku-Ceyhan Trans-Caucasus oil pipeline, remained silent about the Kazakh tyrant's unpleasant practice of dispatching his political critics.

"Since Cheney's May 5 visit with Nazarbayev," writes the *Tribune*, "opposition leaders pushing for democratic change in Kazakhstan are beginning to wonder about the Bush administration's commitment to the president's inauguration rhetoric."

Sergei Duvanov, deputy director of the Kazakhstan International Bureau for Human Rights and Rule of Law, accuses the US of siding with vicious dictators against the millions of people they oppress. "Nazarbayev was very glad to hear what Cheney had to say, and understood it as carte blanche to come down harder on the opposition," Duvanov, a former journalist who spent a year and a half in a Kazakh prison on rape charges trumped up to silence his pro-democracy reporting, said. "He now understands that building democracy is not as important as oil and economic stability."

At first glance, Kazakhstan appears to be booming. The country is "overrun with construction cranes," reports the *New York Times*. Almaty has its first French restaurant. There's even a Kazakh edition of *Cosmopolitan* magazine. But there are two economies, one for a tiny portion of wealthy elites, the other for everyone else. The Red Cross says that "three-quarters of Kazakhstan's 15.7 million population [lives] below the poverty line." Poverty is getting worse as spending by corrupt government officials and their oil-connected benefactors fuels inflation.

Someday, inevitably, those millions of Kazakhs will liberate themselves from Nazarbayev's rule. They, not him, will control the world's largest untapped oil reserves. And they won't forget America's role in prolonging their agony.

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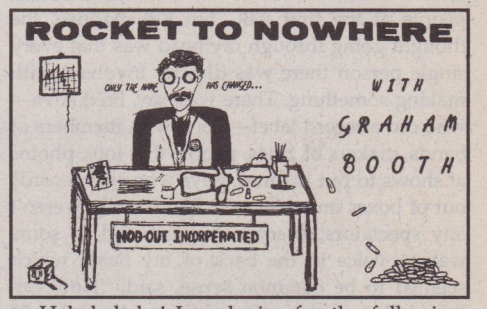
NEW BOOK! *Silk Road to Ruin: Is Central Asia the New Middle East?* (NBM Publishing, 304 pp., price $22.95), is out now! You can get the book at any bookstore or comics shop, or on the internet. It's a comprehensive primer to the political powderkeg of Central Asia—Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Xinjiang in Western China—that will soon make the current war in Iraq look like Dick Cheney's proverbial "cakewalk." It includes 100 pages of graphic novella accounts of my trips to the 'Stans, photos and maps of the region, and in-depth essays explaining everything from oil pipeline politics to *buzkashi*, the craziest and most dangerous sport currently played by the human race.



Hahahahaha! I apologize for the following, but what good is having a column if you can't brag once in a while? Where do I begin...

So late last week, I was leaving work as usual. Now that I'm working full-time, I don't have the countless hours of free time to be out scouring the record stores every day. If I'm lucky, I usually manage to hit one or two stores a week. Last week was particularly busy, so the fact that I was sneaking out to my favorite digs after work was definitely stretching the tolerance of a certain, uh, "significant other." Little did I know that on that fateful evening, I would actually be breaching the entire space/time continuum.

It wasn't apparent at first. The drive over was rather uneventful, and I parked the car as I normally do. Walking through those doors, it appeared to be the same record store I'd been going to for so many years. As routine would dictate, I headed straight for the singles, glancing up at the same overpriced eye-candy on the walls. Even the first few wads of singles I pulled out from the bins looked painfully familiar. I'd been looking at some of these same records for several years.

Things changed as soon as I hit the G divider. There it was, all by its lonesome, there in the G section. One single, staring straight back up at me. The band photo on the cover looked more than just familiar. This was one of the worst records of all time! Not only that, but having seen countless reissues of it over the years, it had been burned into my memory forever.

I picked it up and flipped it over. Something was very wrong here. "For extra copies, send one dollar to..." What's that? I thought the reissue had the revised back cover?! God forbid someone would actually be sending one dollar to a long defunct label address! Well, honestly, I'd never really paid attention to the intricacies of the bootleg version. Hmmm. Why don't we have a look inside...

I slipped two fingers into the top opening, gently pulling the panels apart to get a peek inside. What's that? I grabbed the edge of the

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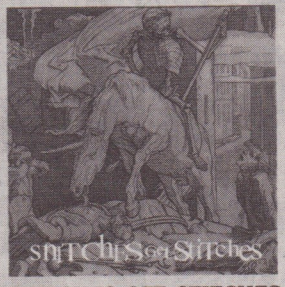

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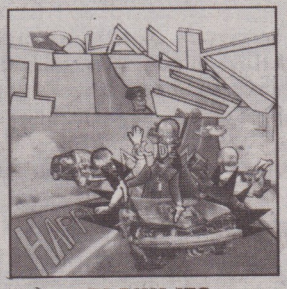

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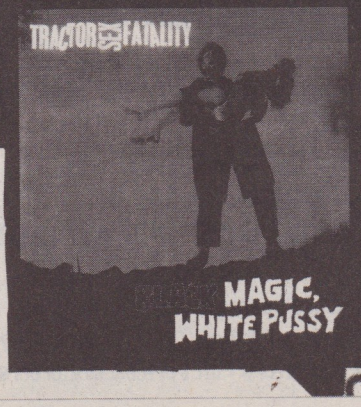

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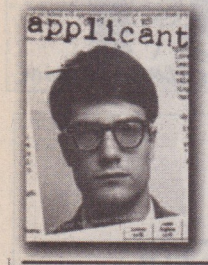

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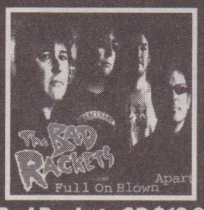

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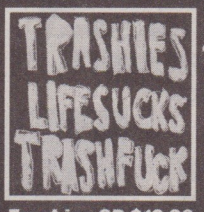

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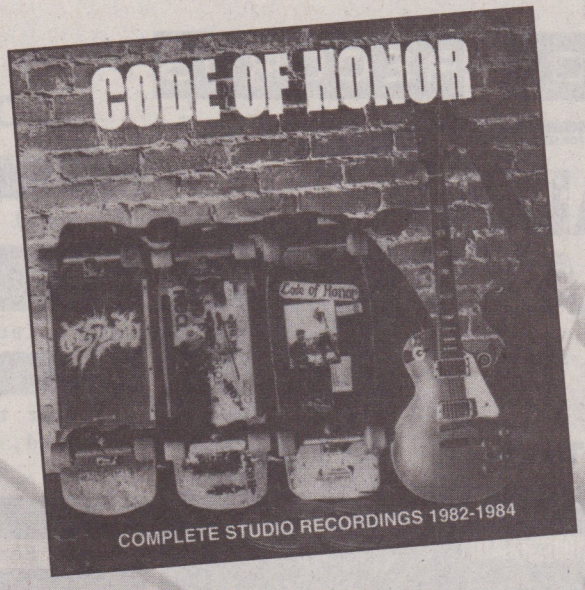

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vinyl and gently started sliding it out. I looked inside again. Wow! It can't be. But there it was in plain sight, a little piece of typewritten paper, folded once. I continued to pull the vinyl out of the sleeve. Boy! This record is Cuh-Lee-Heen! Really, it looks fresh off the press and that white label popped. I flipped it over. Blank black label, just as I expected. I turned it over again. "WHAT RECORDS?" "1977."

I then inspected the insert more closely. It was similarly clean. Like probably never even handled, or even taken out of the sleeve clean. The lyrics read, "by Bobby Pyn." I scanned down to the bottom. "Once more you morons" "(Published by Lexitron Music/ASCAP)." Unreal. I slid the record and insert back inside, and flipped it back over to inspect the front cover in utter disbelief. I mean, how was this record not on the wall? What the hell is going on here?!

Then I glanced down at the pricetag. Uhh, Boi-oi-oiing! *Get the fuck out!* That sticker does not say $3.99! Cannot compute! Cannot compute! Is this a set up? Some kind of test? Ohmigod! $3.99! How am I going to get out of here with this thing? I quickly flipped through the boxes, and picked out two more singles that looked even remotely interesting. I literally did this for no other reason than I could sandwich this fucking GERMS single between them so as not to be spotted by anyone who might be looking in my direction.

Paranoid Time indeed! I started coming up with all of these insane scenarios about how the record ended up there. Like, these people cannot be so oblivious to pass over the first GERMS single, can they? Maybe it was just a fluke. They probably thought it was a reissue, right? But it's the fucking GERMS goddamnit! They'd charge $9.99 for a friggin' reissue! Of course, sometimes they'll price things low if they're in bad condition...but this thing looks brand new!

I became convinced that, during that brief instance at the bins, I had somehow thwarted the efforts of a disgruntled employee who had planted the single there, either to retrieve it on a coffee break, or to have a friend retrieve it at a given time. Wow! How did I ever manage to be there at exactly the right time? Yikes, I gotta get out of here before someone spots me. I mean, jesus, it's obvious something's going on with me. There's no way in hell I can explain away the beads of sweat dripping down my forehead with any degree of believability. "Um, yeah, uh, I, like, really need to use the bathroom." This is getting pathetic.

I started ambling around the store aimlessly, trying to recoup some semblance of my usual digging routine. Maybe I need to grab some LPs to pad out my purchase. Eureka! With more things in my stack, the cashier will have far less time to scrutinize each individual item. I started flipping through LPs. Easier said than done. Man, it was rough. I can't fucking concentrate one bit, and these were the same shitty records that have been sitting here for the last six months.

I was in full on panic mode at this point. I must have started off towards the cashier three times, before, each time, rethinking and turning back. The dreaded cashiers would be the end of me. Who would I get? Would they have any idea who THE GER...uhh, who am I kidding! But would they recognize the cover of the first GERMS single? It's not like it has their name on the front. It could be any band for all they know. And even if they did recognize it, would they know the nuances of a reissue copy, or even question a pricetag put on the record by a fellow employee? I obviously wasn't ready to deal with such deep philosophical questions.

Just standing there was starting to take its toll on me. I was beyond impatient, and the place was too crowded to deal with. I finally decided it was time to tear off the proverbial band-aid. Let's get this over with ASAP. I got in line and waited. It wasn't a very long wait. The records were already in her hands before I realized I was standing there at the cash register. I tried to relax, but she seemed to be inspecting each record rather closely. Come on, come on! I *winced* when she got to the GERMS. Sooner than I could wipe the sweat from my brow, she was onto the next one...

That's right, she didn't even flip the thing over! Doesn't she know what she's holding in her hands? It's $3.99 lady! $3.99! It's the first fucking GERMS single! Practically the first LA punk single! What is your problem? Why do you even work here? Don't you know anything!?!

As you might guess, from then on, it was all smiles. And hours and hours worth of triumphant phonecalls. "Oh, you'll never guess what I just bought for $3.99." I literally jacked up my phonebill with overages, just bragging about my newfound GERMS single. At 40 cents a minute, I think that's where I really ended up paying for it in the end. But it was all worth it. I mean, for a punk record, it's certainly not the most expensive, or rarest, or best (well, it may be the worst—no small feat). But in terms of pure collector clout, I'd guess that I won't need to find another decent record in a store for at least another 3-5 years. And, after all, it was an upgrade!

By the way, I realize that I probably come off as a paranoid skitzo in this column, but I do have prior cause for concern. Back when I was living it up in Evanston, IL, I happened to live a block away from two of the best record stores that ever existed in the Chicago area (which are both now long gone). The first would be Raw Records (admittedly not the easiest place to get raging deals on old punk records). The other was actually my favorite store for a time, Second Hand Tunes—Vinyl Annex. They have since combined their CD and Vinyl stores into one, and unfortunately they lost the best buyer/pricer (as in, non-horder) they ever had. Back then, I used to scour the bins several times a week, and I remember the dollar bins were often very fruitful.

On one particular day, said pricer was out sick, and his replacement from parts South was manning the cash register. At that point, I was starting to get interested in '60s psychedelic music. I knew (and still know) relatively little about it, but I had coincidentally picked up the 13TH FLOOR ELEVATORS *Psychedelic Sounds Of* LP around the same time, and was slowly delving into the International Artists catalog. Actually, that 13TH FLOOR ELEVATORS was an early score on Ebay—the Mono original in great shape for around $30. I digress. I had heard of the RED CRAYOLA, but knew nothing of the group, not even what their records looked like.

So that day, I was flipping through the dollar bins, and it was actually quite tedious considering that I would go through the same bins with the same records at least two times a week. I came across a white cover with an elaborate full color psychedelic-looking drawing printed on it—I could barely make out anything in the mess of it. I flipped it over, and it said THE RED CRAYOLA *A Parable of Arable Land*. I was shitting! Sure, it was a UK (Radarscope) reissue from the late '70s, but here's a record I was actively looking for, that I don't even know what it looks like, and it's right here in front of me with a $0.99 pricetag on it! It was amazing!

Similar to the GERMS experience, I pulled out a few more LPs, probably even a sealed EPICYCLE LP, which I used to find regularly there. I took them up to the register to pay, and while cashier was going through the records, he spotted RED CRAYOLA and did a double-take. "Mmmght. I can't sell you this for that!" I shrug and he continues that it's a rare record, and it should be *a lot* more than that. He proceeds to guffaw and make faces and reiterates, "I can't believe this! Yeah, I can't sell this to you." He puts it back on the shelves behind him being the hoarding asshole he is, and takes my money for the other records.

I could never tell what he was thinking, but I always assumed he thought that I had switched pricetags on it. That really pissed me off. I mean, I don't think they had a more regular customer than me at that point. Plus, I still don't know whether he took the record home with him that night. I will always suspect that he did. I wouldn't even care about it, except that I'm the one who was down on my hands and knees digging that fucker out of there. If I hadn't been there, there's no way in hell that guy woulda got it. Thanks to him, I'll never look at a record store clerk the same way! Until next month...

Hola, amigos. Pardon my disappearance there for a couple months—I felt it was incumbent upon me to give learning a second language a second shot, so I headed down to Guatemala and spent a while up in the mountains learning grammar, vocabulary, and "fuck" and "shit" in Spanish, all the while keeping an eye out for local metal bands. GUERREROS DEL METAL,

Guatemala City's finest purveyors of Christian metal, was about all I could find, unless you count TRANSMETAL, the long-running Mexico City death/thrash outfit whom everyone swore was either Guatemalan or Spanish so as to avoid expressing fondness for anything relating to Mexico, something that no self-respecting Guatemaltecan would ever consider. Though I did come back with a couple mercado-bought CD-R's of both groups, I opted mainly for more culturally enriching endeavors such as learning about the 36-year US-funded civil war, observing Guatemalan orthopedic surgery, and enjoying the fruits of amoebic dysentery for the second time in my life.

So there's been plenty to catch up with since returning, and the new STARKWEATHER album, *Croatoan*, is as good a place as any to start. Even more surprising than the fact that this is on the traditionally black metal Candlelight Records (www.candlelightrecordsusa.com), is just how jaw-droppingly good this is. I'm going to go out on a limb and say this is possibly the only time in history that a band has reunited after a ten-year absence and released their best album. While recognizing the importance and influence of their previous release *Into the Wire*, I can't say I was too die-hard a fan of their music. But they've just upped the ante in every regard—this has a superb creepy feel to the riffs and is ridiculously heavy and technical, like a slow-motion MORBID ANGEL. As for Rennie, he's one of the few singers in the genre that can get away with clean vocals. Back in the day I gotta admit I found his delivery not a little annoying, but he's won me over—I respect the fact that he's stuck to his original style that was aped by many, and his screams are some of the most vicious in this or any style. Truly a powerful and epic release that rises far above the usual trappings of the "metalcore" genre.

Obscene Records (www.obscene.cz) tossed a couple releases of note my way recently. First up is the fourth release from the Czech Republic's long-running grinders, INGROWING. Always hearing about them but never giving them a fair shake, this is the first album of theirs I've sat down and digested, and I certainly plan to seek out more after this: first-rate speedy grind, with a definite NASUM-style Scandinavian influence, and that's of course a good thing. *Cloned & Enforced* is a concept album based on dystopic technological futures involving cloning and such—to be honest I didn't pay too much attention to this less-than-novel topic and instead just focused on the precision blasting and killer riffing present. Definitely one of the better grind full-lengths of the year. Seek this out and help them get some of the exposure they warrant.

Unfortunately I'm far less enthusiastic with Obscene's other release: SPLITTER's *En Sorglig Historia*. These guys actually are from Sweden, and though they do possess that great Swedish grind guitar sound, something is severely lacking. None of the arrangements coalesce to anything of note, the songs lack hooks, and the drumming is just a mess. I'm really not sure what they're going for, but it's not too fast and the production is just lousy. Tacked on to the end is their *Stundens Chockerande Intryck* demo, which I prefer, as it's much rawer and more focused. Oh well, not to be too harsh on 'em, they're still a young band, and have potential to be doing better things in the future. For now, though, I'll pass.

Also more than a little disappointing is the new full-length, and first proper non-demo release, from Olympia, Washington's WOLVES IN THE THRONE ROOM, *Diadem of 12 Stars* (Vendlus, www.vendlus.com). Man, what a bummer. As I've stated numerous times, I'm generally not much of a fan of black metal, which these guys had me completely rethinking with their last four-song, forty-minute demo from '04. But gone is the great mix of black metal melancholic discordance with old-school thrash metal riffing, the mix of aggression and melody. Instead, they've toned down considerably, opting almost entirely for the moody melancholic angle popular these days with keyboards and female vocals and nary a single standout riff in the bunch. And whereas the old songs featured multiple shifts in tempo and mood, the current crop confuses variety with repetition; repeating a single riff for 13 minutes does not automatically make a song epic. I'll hope for better next time.

But the new release from Chicago's NACHTMYSTIUM, *Instinct: Decay* (Battle Kommand Records, www.battlekommand.com) convinced me that there's still something worthwhile in black metal. I have the same difficulty pinpointing exactly what's so good about this record as I do with other genre-bending records (see STARKWEATHER). The whole album just works—the riffs are unique and unpredictable, the sound is a strange mix of ultra-raw but still full and heavy and clear, and each song ends up contributing something different and complementary to the whole. There's plenty of atmosphere without sounding too sappy, deliberate or boring, and the grim fast parts are convincingly evil and intense. For what my normally uninformed and uninterested opinion's worth, this is one of the better black metal releases of recent memory.

Moving on to the usual sludge department, we come to the six-song 40-minute MOONSHINE affair, released by Torture Garden Picture Company (torturegardenpictures@hotmail.com). These guys and gal aren't exactly rewriting the book of doom, but they do what they do quite well and have the appropriately monstrously heavy sound required for proper slow-motion carnage. The female vocals are a nice touch, reminding me of the mighty 13, the riff on "White Smoker" is worth the price of admission alone and they get extra credit for their self-applied, Baltimore-roots-hailing, "necro-barn" appellation.

Way, way, waaaaaaaaay crappier is DESOLATEVOID and their release *Self Medicated Psycho Therapy*, which unfortunately features Nick from Crimes Against Humanity Records (www.cahrecords.com), who put this out, and whose output I normally like more often than not. This, however, is unusually generic stoner metal with beginner's level riffs, uninspired drumming and terrible vocals. Sorry, but this is to be avoided at all cost.

Luckily there's no shortage of bands playing slow and heavy these days and enough bands like Spain's MOHO do it well enough to keep me interested. Featuring Inaki, singer for Spanish grinders DENAK and LOOKING FOR AN ANSWER, MOHO's *...He Visto la Cruz al Reves* is 180 degrees from his previous bands, reveling in the kind of dirty, noisy, painful sludge that CORRUPTED perpetrated before becoming an art band. They speed things up at times, and these stoner rocking moments are the weakest on the album, but fortunately this is kept to a minimum and the majority of the record is all slow pounding tar-ridden misery of the best sort. On thick vinyl in a nice gatefold LP (Throne Records, www.thronerecords.net).

My pals Sven and Sandro over at RSR Records (http://mitglied.lycos.de/skrupel) sent along two recent releases, starting with FUCK ON THE BEACH's *I Have Never Seen Myself* picture 10". Had no idea these guys were even around anymore—it's been ages, honestly, since these guys even crossed my mind. Despite their energetic live show that I was privileged enough to see, I can't say I was ever a huge fan of these Japanese maniacs- most of their stuff was just a bit too same-sounding for me. Nothing here's doing anything to radically change my mind, but it is good to hear them again after so long, and they certainly do their patented fastcore sound well.

Also on RSR is the PHOBIA / SKRUPEL split 7". Germany's long-running grind squad SKRUPEL kick out eight more raging bursts of furious noisy chaotic grind with great vocals and lyrics. PHOBIA, meanwhile, continues to enjoy their recent resurgence with five tracks of seriously devastating grind. This is just all-go all the time, some of their fastest and most straightforward stuff of late, but with a heavier than usual sound. Totally killer stuff from both bands. And speaking of PHOBIA, I assume anyone reading this column has figured out that their latest full-length, *Cruel*—CD on Willowtip, LP on Deep Six—is gonna be hard to beat for best grind record of the year. If you haven't picked this up yet, you must have your priorities seriously out o' whack.

One final piece of vinyl came my way recently in the form of BATTLETORN's *Burn Fast* EP on Mad at the World Records (www.matwrecords.com). This was the first I've heard from this New York duo, as my fear of them being an indie irony-metal band (a fear aggravated by their previous connection with Troubleman Records) steered me clear of earlier releases. But then, half the band—singer/guitarist Omid—was in ENEMY SOIL and that goes a long way in my book, plus this just rocks; it's noisy and fast as hell, heavy and ridiculously blown-out, like a lo-fi black metal KARP. And at six songs in four minutes, there's no time for pretense, satire, or anything short of pounding destruction. A nice surprise.

In other not-strictly-metal fare, *Vibin'* from the bizarre Athens, GA outfit COULIER showed up at MRR—not surprisingly, in the reject bin. This is certainly not standard MRR hardcore fare, being the sort of noodly nerdy math-rock stuff that usually annoys the piss out of everybody. COULIER, however, is more annoying in how

enviously good they are at their instruments, and given that the stuff they come up with is actually catchy and interesting, they're elevated for me anyway, into the sort of guilty pleasure I'll file alongside DON CABALLERO, UPSILON ACRUX, and the like. Within the space of twenty minutes (there's an extended 50-minute bullshit remix to pad things out), these guys shift through every permutation imaginable of rock, prog, metal, a couple blasts, and atmospherics, and do it well enough to make me not a little sad they've already broken up. It's on Stickfigure Records (www.stickfiguredistro.com).

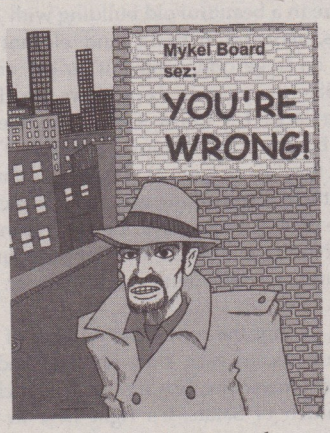
Next up, another pair of releases, this time from This Dark Reign Recordings (www.thisdarkreign.com). Again starting with the better of the two—Akron, Ohio's ULTRALORD delivers eight tracks of misanthropic metal on *We Hate You and Hope You Die*. The songs are longer than they need to be and they have idiotic titles like "Wizard Pimp" and "Pussy Witch" and those are about the only bad things about this— everything else is just killer. This has a great mid-pace yet totally relentless attack, like a hardcore band playing detuned sludge. I kept thinking of a less noisy, more riff-oriented WATCHMAKER with a singer who sounds uncannily like the guy from Texas 80's thrashers DEVASTATION. Every song is boiling over with hatred and rage and the riffs are just neck-breakingly catchy. These guys used to play in RUNE and FISTULA and sound not at all like either and that's just fine, 'cause this new group more than stands on its own.

The newer and weaker of This Dark Reign's output comes from Long Island doom metal trio NEGATIVE REACTION. I remember getting these guys' first full-length, *endofyorerror* ten years ago at me olde radio station in college and digging it quite a bit, so I was pleased to hear from 'em again. Unfortunately, after spinning this a few times I figured out why I hadn't heard from them since then—they kinda suck. For a band that's been around over fifteen years with four full-lengths, they're still using surprisingly z-grade cutout-bin riffs, the kind you'd come up with in your first high school band and scrap a year later. Plus the hoarse shriek of the vocals is just damn near unlistenable. Sorry—I really wanted to like this, and maybe a few more listens will reveal something worthwhile, but for now, I wish they'd remained part of my memories.

Also in the "file under unessential" department, the normally reliable Selfmadegod (www.selfmadegod.com) has delivered unto me Philadelphia's XXX MANIAK and their *Harvesting the Cunt Nectar*. Once I've managed to actually type out the words to that title, any serious commentary on the group's musical merits would be ludicrous—this band is here for three things: to offend, offend, and offend some more. The most noteworthy thing about this duo is that they also play in RUMPELSTILTSKIN GRINDER, and I'm trying not to let that affect how much I like GRINDER. Really, if you throw out the shock-value samples and song titles, there's not much going on here—pretty average drum-machine-fueled porno-gore-grind. Lovers of the collected compositional work of MORTICIAN, LAST DAYS OF HUMANITY, and THE MEATSHITS will dig this—the rest of us will enjoy having girlfriends.

Lastly I want to say a few words about a great new zine covering the grind/power violence scene—DROP OUT, from Poland. Recently released issue number two features interviews with IRON LUNG, PHOBIA, APARTMENT 213, Selfmadegod Records (maybe someone shoulda asked him what was up with that XXX MANIAK record), MAGRUDERGRIND, a great interview with Rich Johnson from ENEMY SOIL / THE INDEX / DRUGS OF FAITH, nice brief retrospectives on EVOLVED TO OBLITERATION and STAPLED SHUT, lots of photos, and a bunch more. Lead editor Galon, who seems to have done just about everything himself, does a great job of asking really personally tailored questions to each band, not just the same stock set of questions like so many other mags—you can really tell he cares about and is into each band he interviews. I also like that he prints a discography list for several of the bands. I'm guessing if you like the stuff discussed in this column, you'll definitely be into the bands he covers. I hope to see more in the future from Galon and crew. Get in touch: dropout@go2.pl and www.myspace.com/dropoutzine.

Unfortunately I have to end on some rather sad news. This is to be my penultimate Zombie Picnic for Maximum. School's winding up to be more and more intense this year and much as I enjoy scouring the world wide web for new grindcore bands, it's not the most conducive of activities for studying. I still plan on staying semi-involved in the scene, reviewing from time to time, and I've even started playing in a new band. Hopefully in due time we'll have a demo and, god willing, a myspace page so that the tables will be turned and someone else can mercilessly ravage my creations for a change. It's been a great last couple years and the people I've gotten to know via the column have meant more to me than all the fanciest free records combined. Even the picture discs. Please do get in touch or stay in touch: Elliott Lange, 1320 Fulton St, San Francisco, CA 94117, USA, cromlaughs@hotmail.com.



We are all our own legal system, where we feel the need and see the opportunity; apprehending, judging, dispensing and, where we can, enforcing whatever by our personal philosophy we deem legitimate.

—Iain Banks

What is it with hets? I've been writing for years about how I don't fall for this genetics-equals-sexuality crap. How we're masters of our own souls, captains of our individual destinies. But if I did believe in a genetic link, I'd say that it there must be a link between the gene that imparts the disease of heterosexuality and the gene that imparts the disease of stupidity.

Steve is as ugly as a hairy back: fat, bad teeth, jowls that nearly touch under his chin. A het if there ever was one.

"Hey Steve," I ask. "Wanna go in here for a drink? They serve Yeungling on tap."

"Mykel!" he whispers. "That's a gay bar. I don't want to go in there. They'll be all over me. I'll feel, you know, uncomfortable. I believe in rights and all that, but I don't want to go where I'm going to have a hand on my ass."

"You're ugly!" I don't tell him, but I should. "Being homo *gives* you taste. It doesn't make you lose it. Just because guys like some other guys, it doesn't mean they like *all* other guys. Jezus fuckin' Christ. You like girls, but are you gonna try and cop a feel on Hillary Clinton?"

Steve doesn't answer this, because I don't really say it. We're friends despite his stupidity. But it gets me thinking about this homo matter. It also provides me with a convenient introduction to this month's column, which, although called *The Boy with The Perfect Nose*, is actually about my jury duty.

The jury system could be great. It's a chance for the average Jane to judge the relative idiocy of the laws made in her name. If she doesn't like a law, she can vote *not guilty* to show her dislike of that law, or the methods used to enforce it. It is only incidental whether the person accused actually committed the crime. That's small potatoes in the stew of things. But an individual voting on the entire criminal justice system? That's a big deal! At least it should be.

But, in its never-ending efforts to make individuals powerless, the government has lied to jurors. Judges tell us that we cannot decide on the law. We can only decide on the *facts*. Is a witness lying or telling the truth? Were they where they said they were, or somewhere else? Jury duty becomes a meaningless act, a waste of time. No wonder most people hate it. What good is it?

Every four years, I get a letter calling me to serve time on a jury. Actually, the letters come more frequently, but I only have to go once in four years. Last time was on a bribery case. I was the only holdout. Eleven guilty votes and me. Sure, the guy did it. But I hated the way the government used wiretap evidence and informers. Eventually, my co-jurors browbeat me into changing my vote. A real loss of integrity. I hated myself for it and vowed it wouldn't happen again.

"I just tell 'em I'm gay," says my pal Marshall. "That gets me excused right away."

"Isn't that illegal discrimination?" I ask.

"Oh, they just think I'm too liberal. They always find another reason to send me packing," he tells me.

Now I find myself in the jury waiting room, typing this very column. Thank G-d for the lack of music! But silence is not to be had. Two older

women chat in front of me: The old body parts aren't what they used to be. Isn't it awful what some celebrity did to some other celebrity?

I try not to listen. Others here, like most of silence-hating America, have to clear their throats, cough loudly, or fiddle with a newspaper. At least I can thank the Bitch Goddess that they confiscate cell phones on the way in.

There's a library-like feel here, though the biddies in front don't get it. From way in the back comes the buzz of another pair of chatting females. Only women talk. Men cough.

I guess there's nothing wrong with it. It isn't a library. No "shhh" signs. But somehow there doesn't seem to be, I don't know…a respect.

I notice a young blond guy with curly hair. He smiles at me. A friendly type. He's wearing some college sweatshirt that's an awful salmon color with white lettering. Exactly which college never registers in my brain. I'm too busy planning what I'll say to the judge. He'll ask me, "Can you promise to judge the facts of the case as you see them and follow the law as I give it to you?"

"I believe in the right of jurors to vote their opinions," I'll say. "I believe that each individual must judge the law as well as the facts. Juries are the last protection against bad laws."

It's likely he'll throw me out then. But everyone in the courtroom will have heard me. I can make more of an impression by being excused than by serving.

A big black court clerk enters and gives us an introduction and orientation: nuts and bolts, no civic duty stuff.

You must not serve if you do not live in the area covered by the Southern District Court. That is Manhattan, The Bronx, Westchester, Rockland, and Putnam counties. You must not serve if you have been convicted of a felony or are under indictment for a felony. You may *not serve if you are over 70 years old. If you are over 70, it is optional. If you choose to serve, we welcome your service.*

So those most sympathetic to the defendant—those who know what it's like having been convicted—they are denied the right to convict. Ah, America. How do I hate you? Let me count the ways.

The clerk tells us to stand on line at the sides of the room. We then should hand in our summons and answer the question, *Are you ready to serve?*

"Not that it matters," he says. "Ready or not here you come."

The guy has a good sense of humor. He seems to like performing.

With so much experience, the organization here could have been better. Why not stand a row at a time, like on an airline? Reseating provides a lucky break, though. The biddies are no longer together. It's quiet(er).

Now there's a movie about the jury process. Here's where all the civic duty and thrill of the jury service come into practice. The woman in the movie—the hostess—has a very severe body. She could be anorexic. She's in office lady drag, about 45, with sharp features and hollow cheeks, white as a country club.

The movie takes about half an hour. In it, the judges are all white. There's an Indian (turban, not feather) lawyer. The former jurors they interview are mostly white. They talk to a farmer in front of his cows. A septuagenarian former librarian is at home, in front of a bookcase. This was not made for New Yorkers.

The film stresses what I hate about the jury system: the need for ignorance. *Don't look things up. Don't research the topic. Don't know anything—that's the key.* It's awful. Then, it's over.

After the movie, nothing. Now we have real silence, except for an occasional cough, more like throat clearing, and the rustle of pages. If I concentrate, I can hear the hum of air conditioning. No music. No voices. Even the tap, tap, tap, of my computer keyboard destroys the calm. I'll stop. I wish I were awake enough to enjoy the quiet.

Now it's 10 a.m. I guess there'll be one round of jury picking in an hour, then back again for a second round, then home. Outside, it's pouring rain.

I'm called on the first round. I'm one of 50 jurors, about a quarter of the whole room. We line up. "I hope you brought your umbrellas," says the guard.

We go outside into downpour, torrents, ark-building weather. We're across the street, in *the other building*. Another Federal court, in the worst of all possible worlds. I'm on the panel for Grand Jury Duty. *One month of service.* How can I survive on no income for a month? $40,000 in debt. I'll sink. I'll never get out. I'll have to live off eBay or something. What awful bad luck. I guess everyone in the room is thinking the same thing.

At first they pick 23 people. Then they go through them, one at a time, as each tries to get out of service.

One by one, the jurors whine to the judge. He dismisses the first three—a bad sign for the rest of us. Number four stays. Looks like the judge is getting tougher. Is being thrown out of your apartment for not paying rent a good enough excuse?

After they go through everybody (most have some excuse), they call new names to fill the vacated spots. From the first round, 14 of the original 23 are still stand—err… sitting.

We're in a beautiful old building with 20-foot ceilings, recessed lighting, and elegant floral design on huge ceiling tiles. It strikes me how churchlike the place is. Long pews, an altar up front, a large US Court seal where the cross would be. Even the windows are high. Though arched, they're not quite as pointed as a church's.

But there is something evil about this church. The District Attorney says the proceedings are secret. No one's allowed in except the jury, the prosecutor, the defendant, and his lawyer. Secret trials.

And I count the rows—the number of pews. There are six on each side. Six Six. And how many windows? Six. *Six Six Six.* It is a church. The Church of Satan. It's right here in lower Manhattan.

But there's no fire or brimstone. In fact, it's ice cold. Several people have complained about the air-conditioning. We've just come in from the pouring rain and the air-conditioner is on so high the snot is freezing in our noses. The fingertips of my right hand are numb. I look at them. They're wrinkled as if I've just come out of a pool. A tubercular guy in the front row coughs for real, from deep in his lungs. Jezus fuckin' Lucifer.

Now they've got nine empty seats to fill. Where will I be? Eight, seven, six, five, four, three, two…I'm not in this round. But there'll be other whiners, others excused. How can I get out of it? Book tour? Old parents? Contrary views? I don't know. If I have to serve, I'll be out on the street. Jury duty itself puts a crimp in my budget, but a month? I'll die.

I should have worn an *Osama bin Laden was Right* t-shirt. Or maybe carried that Dennis Cooper novel. You know, the homo one where the guys fuck each other, then one guy rips open the other and plunges his hands into the still-warm intestines. Yeah, Dennis Cooper would keep me off a jury.

My head is pounding. My blood pressure's way up. I can feel the mercury rising, a million over 7324. I'll explode like that guy in *Scanners*. Seat number 13 has been excused three times. I'm going to get seat number 13, I know it. It's jinxed. Like Apollo 13. I'll never make it. Some mob boss will have me rubbed out…Ah, they fill it with someone else. But seat number one, the foreman's seat, is empty. I can't be the foreman. The foreman has to be there every day. The guard explained that we can have a few days off—all we have to do is check with the foreman. That means the foreman *has* to be there. Otherwise, who do you check with? Fuck, I'm going to be the foreman.

OK, I've decided to serve. I won't complain. It'll be an adventure. Somehow, I'll live. It'll be a chance to spout off to 22 other people. Tell 'em about the *real* jury system. Tell 'em how it's their duty to vote their conscience *regardless* of the law. Tell 'em that juries are—or should be—the last protection humans have against bad laws. Everything else is just representative. You vote for someone and—they win. You never have a say personally. It's an awful system. Here's a chance to act on your own. A tiny sliver of real power. Seize it! Don't like government spying? Refuse to indict if it's used. Don't like crimes with no victims? Drug laws? Prostitution? Refuse to indict! For this one time, you have the power. Use it.

I picture myself standing up before my fellow jurors, index finger in the air making an impassioned speech. The Patrick Henry of Pearl Street. The score:

14 out of 23 stay.
9 out of 14
5 out of 9
2 out of 5
Not quite yet.
1 out of 2

Here it comes…I'm the last to be chosen…nope.

But wait—there's a hitch. There are two more jurors to be chosen. This time for *really long* term service. Eight months. That I cannot do. I guess I'll just be honest and say it'll break me. If I don't work, I don't get paid. I can't live for two months on no pay.

There is a tension in the room. Everyone

hopes it's someone else. Everyone hopes there'll be no dismissals, as our pool of jurors has shrunken considerably. They call one person. Not me. Then another. Oh no, the first is let off. Some lame-ass excuse, I'm sure. How could the judge be so dumb as to buy that? What a sucker. He believes this guy, but he won't believe me. It's just not fair.

Another name chosen. Again, not me.

Then it's over… at least for the grand jury.

"Those of you not chosen for the grand jury will return to the jury pool," says the judge.

"We're free," breathes a woman a few years younger than me. Her long blonde hair frames a hippie-ish face—pretty, without make-up.

I'm sure someone will call us back. There's been a mistake. They need one more. *Will the jurors please return to the Grand Jury room?* It doesn't happen. I'm free. Sort of.

The courtroom clerk tells those of us lucky enough not to have been chosen to return to the jury pool. As we head back toward the X-ray machine, a guard stops us. (Note: there has been an increase in security. In the subway yesterday, there were cops and a check table. When I passed City Hall, there were riot cops with bulletproof vests and machine guns. I guess the terror alert is up. Are we orange yet?)

I look around at the pool of jurors. There's one older colored guy who wears a blue shirt and tie. One other white guy has a suit on, but he looks more like a salesman than a lawyer or businessman. Most of the rest of the jurors are under 40, more women than men. No one looks rich. There is one beautiful boy with a perfect nose. His brown hair curls around the lower part of his ear. But it is the nose that attracts me. Not large or fat or wide, but perfect, coming out from between his eyebrows with a strong, intentional force, then ending in a soft smooth roundness. He could be a first-year college student. Maybe he's into older men. I smile at him. He doesn't smile back. I go to lunch.

I eat outside in *the food court.* I order a five-dollar *veggie melt wrap* and sit down. At the table next to me is the blond college student with the curly hair and ugly sweatshirt. He seems like a friendly guy, but I don't have anything to say to him. He looks very non-punk, and I'm not really in making-new-friends mode. (Except maybe for the guy with the perfect nose.)

We nod hello at each other and don't say a word. After I finish my wrap, I get up and walk down to Nassau Street. There used to be a store there that sold cheap porno videos. Maybe I can find it.

I give the college kid a little wave as I get up. Heading toward Nassau Street it suddenly occurs to me: *security*. When I enter the courthouse, I'm going to have to show my bag to the security guard. Am I going to want to explain *Oriental Gash Guzzlers?* I don't think so. Maybe it'll help keep me off a jury, but the way things are going, it might—sooner rather than later—bring me in front of one. I forgo the trip and head back to the courtroom. It's 1:30.

Lunch is officially over at 2:00. I sit in the workroom, right outside the main jury assembly room. It's a room with library-like study cubicles. I take out my Toshiba and type these words. At 2:30 the court clerk begins a new round of name-calling. My name is third. Also chosen in this round are the college kid and the guy with the beautiful nose. "Here!" I shout from the workroom when the clerk calls my name. I gather up my computer and notes and head upstairs to yet another courtroom.

In this new room, another clerk has placed the paper slips with our names in a cage like the ones they use to choose lottery balls. He spins the cage and picks out a name.

Juror number one…please take the first seat in the front row, closest to the judge. He reads the name from the paper: *Jonathan Hagler.*

A man about my age—taller with more hair, though it's gray—stands and walks through the gate to the front of the room. He climbs up into the jury box and takes the first seat.

Juror number two…please take the seat next to juror number one, in the font row. He reads the name from the paper: *Mykel Board.*

(Actually, he reads *Michael Board,* which sounds exactly the same as *Mykel Board.* But the first is my legal name, the latter my pen…err…e-name.)

I pick up my computer bag, walk to the front, and sit down next to Jonathan.

One by one, the clerk picks other names to fill the rest of the vacant chairs. The college kid sits in the front row of the waiting area. He catches my eye several times. I wonder if we'll be on the same jury. Weird feeling. Does he know me?

Juror number six…please take the seat next to juror number five, in the font row: Joshua Rothenstein.

A 30-somethingish guy with jeans and a black muscle t-shirt clicks his tongue loudly enough for the rest of us to hear. He takes his seat at the end of the row I'm sitting in.

Juror number seven…please take the seat at the front of the next row: He reads the name from the paper: *Edward Rogers.*

Juror number eight…please take the seat next to juror number seven, in the font row. He reads the name from the paper: *Jennifer Lopez.*

"Really?" says the judge.

There is a scatter of light chuckling in the courtroom. A chunky yet attractive Hispanic-looking woman stands up among the other jurors. Certainly *a* Jennifer Lopez, but not *the* Jennifer Lopez. She sits next to Edward.

Juror number nine…please take the seat next to juror number eight. He reads the name from the paper: *Sven Anderson.*

There is a stirring from near the back of the courtroom. I hear a vague *excuse me.* I look up to see who's coming. It's the guy with the perfect nose. The beauty who was there with me in the grand jury room. We're going to be locked together for how long? We'll be on intimate terms before you can say *pitcher or catcher.* This isn't going to be so bad after all.

After the initial 12 seats are filled, each person is questioned by the judge. Just the basics. Education, marital status, job, address, do you know any of the involved parties.

The guy in seat number one isn't married, has a Masters in Linguistics, is a teacher. He is not me. On my turn, I tell the judge we're not brothers. That gets some laughs.

The guy at the end of my row is in the orchestra at the Met. MFA in music studies. Is he married?

"Hardly," he says, "but I've had the same boyfriend for 15 years."

He doesn't say *lover* or *roommate.* He says *boyfriend.*

Maybe it worked for Marshal. It doesn't work for this guy. But he's got another sleeve up his trick.

The judge thanks him and goes on to the next person. The questioning continues. We learn that we've got a grandma "tax consultant" who doesn't look like she can read. We've got a guy in business for himself—owns a crew of trucks, cranes, heavy machinery. He's wearing a suit—the only one of us. One woman is from Inwood, one of the few working class neighborhoods left in Manhattan. There are a couple attorneys, one who works for some financial institution, one who works for an insurance company. After the judge questions everyone, he calls on the lawyers to interrogate us.

They use this chance to let us know the basics of the case. The plaintiff is a cop who works on the waterfront, the New York City equivalent of the Coast Guard. He was injured while climbing out of a boat onto a dock. Something went wrong with the ladder. It's not clear whether he slipped or the ladder broke. I guess we'll find out during the trial.

The cop's lawyer looks pure mob. Big-chested. Full head of gray hair. Expensive suit. A neck as thick as my thigh.

The defendant, of course, is the City of New York. Their lawyer, asking us if we believe that, "sometimes accidents just happen, and nobody is at fault" looks like a Jewish intellectual. Thin guy, gray beard, with a head slightly too big for his body.

"And is there anyone who has a relative in the police force?" asks the city counsel.

The woman from Inwood raises her hand. "I have three nephews who are police officers."

"Are they all patrolmen, or are they officers?" asks the lawyer.

"Two are patrolmen. One's an officer," says the woman.

"Your honor?" says the lawyer to the judge.

"Any objection?" he asks the lawyer for the cop.

The lawyer gets up and asks the woman, "Do you think you can put aside your relatives and decide this case only on its merits?"

The woman doesn't answer.

"Do you think you can be fair and impartial here?" he asks.

"Of course," says the woman.

"Fine," says the judge. And the attorney goes to the next juror.

He gets to the guy with the boyfriend of 15 years.

"I can't possibly be objective," says the guy. "I mean I just lo-o-o-ve policemen. I work out with them at the gym every day. I see them all the time. They're a-a-a-lll my friends. They're just t-o-o wonderful."

"Err," stumbles the attorney, "do you think you could put your…err…special feelings aside and judge this case strictly on the merits?"

"Oh, no," says the young man, with the enthusiasm of a used car salesman, "that would be impossible. I couldn't be objective. They're just too wonderful."

All right," says the judge, "you're excused. Thank you for your frankness."

Suppressing the urge to jump up and clap his hands—but not suppressing a faint smile—the guy gets up, takes the paper from the judge, and heads back to the jury room.

The city lawyers ask a few more questions. I haven't said anything to hurt my chances of staying on this jury. I should be fine. Sequestered with the boy with the perfect nose.

Now it's time for the cop's lawyer to ask the questions.

"This may seem like a strange question," he says. "But there's a reason I'm asking it."

He clears his throat.

"Of all the people alive," says the lawyer, "who is it that you admire most?"

He pauses for dramatic effect.

"Take a second to consider," he says, giving it just about that time before he continues. "We'll start with juror number one."

"There's nobody I admire," the teacher tells the lawyers. "I dislike most people. I think they're all a bunch of conceited, worthless…" He lets this words trail off.

The lawyer and a few other jurors chuckle a bit.

"And juror number two?" he says.

That's me! Fuck, it's a tough one. Everybody I admire is dead. Celine, Lenny Bruce, GG Allin, William Burroughs. Who am I going to say? I don't want to lie, but I don't want to say anything that will get me kicked off either. There's that guy with the perfect nose!

"Jimmy Carter," I say. "I most admire Jimmy Carter."

"That's admirable," he says. "And juror number three?"

He goes down the line. Two of the women in the front row say their mothers. Before long it's Sven's turn. He seems to be a brooder, sitting there with his legs crossed at the knee and stretched in front of him. His head is tucked down, chin to chest.

"Dennis Cooper," he says. "I like Dennis Cooper."

I don't turn to look at him.

"Who's Dennis Cooper?" asks the lawyer.

"He's a writer," answers the boy of perfect nose.

The lawyer nods and continues down the line.

Once everyone answers this question, the City lawyer again gets up to speak.

"One thing I forgot to ask," he says. "You read a lot in the newspapers these days about lawsuits, and people getting money from lawsuits. Is there anyone out there who has feelings one way or another about the right to sue and collect damages?

A few hands go up. I raise mine too…a bit tentatively.

The attorney calls on the lawyer for the insurance company.

"Every day I see the actual, excuse my language, bullshit that people file these days. They claim the most outrageous things. Day after day I see this crap. I can't be objective about it."

"Do you think you could put those feelings aside and judge this case solely on its merits?" asks the lawyer.

"If you would have asked me that last month—before I got this job, I would have said yes," says the attorney. "But now, after what I've seen, there's no way. I'm sorry."

"Thank you for being candid," says the lawyer. "You're dismissed."

He hands the guy his walking papers and the clerk calls a replacement, a shlubby looking guy who could be a butcher. After the initial questions, the city attorney continues. He points to me.

"You had your hand raised," he said. "Do you have feelings about lawsuits?"

"Oh, yes," I say. "I believe in the right to sue. It's lawsuits or the threat of lawsuits that keep government and big corporations honest. They could run roughshod over the public without fear if it weren't for lawsuits. The courts are our last protection."

"Thank you," said the attorney. "Do you think you could put those feelings aside and judge this case solely on its merits?"

I look at Sven sitting sexily to my right and behind me.

"You bet," I tell him. "No problem."

Whew. Almost blew that one.

After a few more questions from the lawyers, the judge speaks to us.

"All right, ladies and gentlemen of the jury…err…prospective jury. You have gone through what's called a Voir Dire, or "say the truth" process. Thank you for your candid replies. The attorneys will now have a conference where they will decide whether to exercise their preemptory exclusions. That means they can excuse any juror based on a hunch or gut feeling. These are limited, but lawyers have the right to them. Please don't take it personally. If you are excused, it is not a reflection on you. It is only a reflection of what the lawyer feels is best for his client. Give them a few minutes."

When the few minutes is over, the lawyers return.

"We have three jurors excused," says the judge. He calls the name of the woman from Inwood. He calls the name of one of the woman who most admired her mother. He calls my name. He doesn't not call Sven's name.

"Thank you," says the judge. "After you're replaced on the jury, you and the rest of the panel should return to the main jury room."

Discouraged, I climb down from the jury box glancing briefly at the boy with the perfect nose. I join the others in the back of the room. We then head back to the jury waiting room. By the elevator, the guy with the college sweatshirt comes up to me and speaks softly into my ear.

"Jimmy Carter?" he whispers. "Yeah, right."

Flash to now: I'm out in Chelsea, with Steve. Under my arm is *Frisk*, a novel by Dennis Cooper. It's a hell of a long shot, but who knows? If Sven hangs out in the city, he'll probably be here. At least in this neighborhood. Steve could be my shill. The ugly guy I'll look so good next to. But he doesn't want to go into the bar. He's afraid they'll go for him. What an idiot!

ENDNOTES: [email subscribers (god@mykelboard.com) or website viewers (www.mykelboard.com) will get live links and a chance to email comment on the column]

—> For more information about jury power, and the possibilities of a *real* jury system, check out www.fija.org. And if you ever get called for jury duty. Just tell the truth. They'll never pick you.

—> *Too Bad Dept:* AP reports that Rush Limbaugh was detained at Palm Beach International Airport in June. The problem? He was found with a bottle of Viagra prescribed in his psychologist's name—not his own. The police were called, but unfortunately, no charges were pressed. Now, if it had been you or me…

—> *See You at the Finale Dept:* In Halberstadt, Germany, the local church is sponsoring a John Cage concert scheduled to last 639 years. It's a version of a composition called "As Slow as Possible." According to a recent press release, a chord change is planned for Friday. Two pipes will be removed from the organ, which is being built as the composition proceeds.

"In these times, acceleration spoils everything," said Heinz-Klaus Metzger, a prominent musicologist whose chance comments at an organ conference nine years ago sparked the project. "To begin a performance with the perspective of more than a half-millennium —it's just a kind of negation of the lifestyle of today."

—> *Whatever Happened to Consent Dept:* I think Kesha forwarded me the article about three guys in jail on felony charges of *castration without malice and practicing medicine without a license.*

Sheriff Tom Alexander and District Attorney Michael Bonfoey announced the arrests of the men in connection with the illegal castrations. The sheriff and prosecutor said the victims were willing participants. The victims met the accused through a locally produced website that published photographs of men engaging in sadomasochistic behavior. Yahoo! shut down the site in December 2004. The castrations took place last year beginning in March and continued through November, according to police documents. The case is the first involving willing castration in the county and could be the first in North Carolina.

"This right here beats everything I have ever seen," the sheriff said.

Dr. Paul Appelbaum, a professor of psychiatry at Columbia University and a past president of the American Psychiatric Association, said voluntary castration appears to be a very rare phenomenon.

"The people who I have seen who have undergone voluntary castration have been psychotic and often in the grip of a delusion that their sexual organs were causing them to behave in evil ways." Appelbaum said. "And they felt that to rid themselves of that evil, it was necessary to rid themselves of their sexual organs."

I say, they sound like the perfect Christians to me. What's the problem? For Christians, sex *is*

evil. I only wish all Christians had the same courtesy these North Carolina guys. It'd sure help reduce the spread of disease. Christianity, I mean. What other disease?

—> *Borders without Borders Dept: The Utne Reader* points out that the success of the French-based humanitarian group "Doctors Without Borders" has spawned dozens of imitators, anxious to build on the successful franchise. There's *Geeks Without Borders, Sisters Without Borders, Librarians Without Borders* and my favorite, *Clowns Without Borders.*

Stay tuned with your donations for the next installment: *Pedophiles Without Borders.* Get those checkbooks ready!

We have been purging our house lately, trying to get rid of some of the hoards of clutter and stuff and make more space. I'm guilty of hoarding things. I save stuff I think I might be able to use, or reuse, as well as magazines and photos and fanzines and all the other forms of media that I inevitably archive and collect. Last month I lamented about all the mail I had in boxes and crates stuffed in a closet. I dragged out some of those boxes, which turned out to be 15 to 20 years old. I had mail from the early days of *S&L*, and the funny thing was that I really did keep everything. I had saved "orders" that were one-liners about getting a copy of the zine. That seemed pretty silly now, and I pretty easily tossed those into the recycling bin. The 25¢ stamp postage for a letter sent then made me cringe a bit with nostalgia, realizing just how much prices of postage and other things have increased.

Digging through the correspondence and pen pals' letters was both more interesting and harder to sort through. Most interesting was finding a few pen pals who I've lost touch with and forgotten over the years. Then there were a few surprises, like letters from people that I still correspond with today that I didn't realize I had known as long as I did, or letters from people who I don't know very well at all today, but have some prominent scene names that today I know. I was able to get rid of some of the junk, which helped.

These days, the mail I save, I will save for the long haul. I've become much more selective with what goes into the archives, as I have with the music and zines. There was a time when I kept every single record or zine I got for review. That would be literally impossible to do these days—plus the reviewers get to keep whatever they review. But even of the stuff I review, I tend to only keep the stuff I really like and know I will listen to, and I pass along things that I doubt I'll be playing regularly. I have so much music I could stop collecting now and still have enough to listen to for an eternity. Of course I don't want to stop hearing new music; I still live for it. But I remember a time when I would buy a new record, put it on the turntable—which had an auto restart and would play over and over again till I stopped it—and ultimately get to know records inside and out in a way that these days I still only do with only a select few favorites.

We hauled off bags and bags of clothes, although I could barely part with a single t-shirt. I still lament the time I made a pillow and stuffed it with old t-shirts, with the intention of opening it up someday and finding a whole new stash of shirts I had forgotten about. Sometime in the process of moving years and years ago, that pillow ended up in someone else's custody, and I haven't seen it since. I have no idea what gems might have been lurking there, but I certainly have no shortage of t-shirts. I probably could wear a different shirt every day for a year and not run out. Although I usually wear the same shirt for days on end, I could never entertain the thought of actually getting rid of most of them. Instead, I still end up buying more from bands I like. Sigh.

Though the house is still full of all the same stuff—though perhaps a bit more floor space is visible here and there, and a bit of wall space might be cleared by the new shelves along the top of the room—we set our sights on the outside. We've lived in the same place for almost nine years. I love the big yard and great garden, and I tend to the various bushes and trees that have grown larger and continue to sprout up anew. Initially I let everything grow, and felt pained at the thought of trimming things or cutting them out or down, especially before I really knew what it was that was growing. Nowadays, though, I can identify the new various trees that will grow like weeds if untended, as well as the wisteria and honeysuckle vines, some of which have bases the size of small trees themselves. The battle with honeysuckle vines in a never-ending one—if you let them go, they will strangle and kill off whatever they grow onto or into. We've got a couple overgrown jungle spots, which I finally decided had to go.

Why I decide they have to go on one of the hottest days of the year, while I am five months pregnant and have barely been stepping out of the air-conditioned house because of the furnace of 100-degree-plus heat, can only be chalked up to the fact that my parents came to visit with the right tools to help me do the job. And as I was out there, tangled in vines, getting my arms and legs scratched up, with my hair dragging along on the ground, I found myself almost cutting my dreads along with the vines a few times, which would have been an ironic purge of its own, since the long vines of hair have been driving me crazy lately too. I got the patch of honeysuckle and thorny bitch rose vine cleared, but I kept the hair for now. I still can't come to terms with chopping that off.

On my own *S&L* zine front, I did hit that brick wall I saw coming last month, and it still came as a shocker. The last issue of *Slug & Lettuce* was only twelve pages long, which is eight fewer than normal, and the smallest issue I've done in many many years. Somehow I wasn't surprised to not hear from any of the regular advertisers, and yet at the same time I was, because I'm so used to the routine. It's as if everyone I know was on vacation or spaced out somewhere, and maybe those things just do come in universal waves. I don't know, it was weird. But I really got to that low point of wondering if the zine had much of a future.

In some ways, I felt relief at a future of not packing up the m-bags or dealing with the bulk mailing permit, things that I have really come to hate. A part of me was ready to let go, if the time was really here. I made a game plan at least for the year—normal fall issue, no winter issue (gonna have a baby instead)—and then a big 20-year anniversary issue next spring—whoop whoop. I kind of just feel like the whole thing will sort itself out. The zine has always had a momentum of its own, and if the zine is tired, well, what can I do? In a way I also feel like it's up to everyone else to figure out the future of the zine—it has become something that depends on the support of the punk community at large. If the community still wants and needs it, like so many people tell me, then I hope that together we can make it happen. A few weeks ago I was feeling dismal about it all, but now I feel much more hopeful, perhaps simply 'cause I got the current issue completed when it seemed it would never happen.

Anyway, I figured that some sort of update was in order. So I'm off to Philly for the punk fest and then back home to Richmond for our own Best Friends Day fest, which looks like it will be as good as any of the other national gatherings that happen, and I'm pretty excited about it being just down the street for once. As dismal and depressing as I might sound lately, I'm actually full of energy and hope and the same passion for punk rock as always. It just gets hard sometimes to have a continual positive outlook that never wavers, and to never miss a beat in the continuity of a project for so many years. A breath of air is needed, and then I can hopefully push forward.

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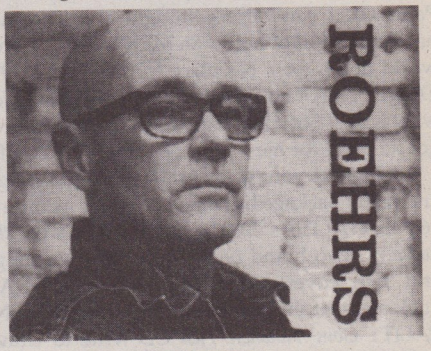


Total Hate

Fuck! You lucky fucks! 86 MENTALITY, one of the hardest of the hardcore/skin/street rock

bands to grace the airwaves this decade, has released a compilation on Grave Mistake Records out of Richmond, Virginia. For you who are not familiar with 86 MENTALITY, this hardcore band crushes your skull the second the music starts. This music is highly recommended by Mr. Carl Cordova, renowned hardcore enthusiast. The singer, Mr. Steve Clark has one of those rough, deep, guttural vocals that fucking rips your ears off! We're talking gargles with broken glass and whiskey here; on top of these intimidating vocals are ferocious guitar leads by Matt Moffatt. The bass thunder is provided by Eric Judycki with excellent drumming by Jason Halal, anchoring the whole sound. This is great shit!

The sound that 86 MENTALITY unleashes on you is unspeakable brutal. This is not for the weak of heart or mind—this is not recommended for you casual warped tour dribble dicks. This is hardcore for aggressive males who like to play rough. The lyrics are equally unapologetic. Read the honest lyrics to "Get Away": "I've heard it all before / Here we go again / All your fucking shit talk / The stories never end / Talkin about fights at shows / Tell me something I don't know / I don't really give a shit / I'm sick of fucking hearin' it / Get away, just get away / Get away from me / Shut your fuckin' trap for once / And get away from me / I don't care where you grew up / I don't care who you beat up / I don't care when you hung out / I don't care just shut your mouth." Isn't it refreshing to have such open expression of anger in a band? No pent up emotions here!

In "Way of Life", 86 MENTALITY clarifies their opinion on hardcore "nostalgia." Read this: "Can't relate to anyone I meet / Dirty looks cuz the boots on my feet / Upper crust always seems to stare / Don't fit in cuz the clothes I wear / Got no message, got no voice / Working to live, ain't got no choice / What do we got, what do we got / A fucking mess, that's our lot / Day by day just tryin to survive / Another day livin subculture life / Hangin' out, another night / have a laugh and have a fight / You call it nostalgia / I call it a way of life / What do we got a way of life." Fuck! That shit will grab you by the larynx and drag your ass to the floor! The anthem for 86 MENTALITY (as in 86'd from the club) expands on how these men do not fit into our cookie-cutter society. Read "86 MENTALITY": "Everyday the same old shit / Dead end life I'm sick of it / Paranoid, I can't think straight / Fucked up head that's full of hate / 86 MENTALITY / This world don't got / No place for me / 86 MENTALITY / I got no society / Scratch and claw for what I can / Social systems just a sham / Futures got no place for me / I got no society." Whew!

Tighten up your boots for this CD! This rough and ready package has nineteen songs including 86 MENTALITY's 2004 debut 7", 2005's *On the Loose* 7", two brand new songs, two live songs and two cover songs (4-SKINS and SOA). Fucking great shit! For your copy of the 86 MENTALITY *Goin' Nowhere Fast* CD write to Grave Mistake Records, PO Box 12482, Richmond, VA 23241, www.gravemistakerecords.com.

Mike at Longshot Records has a storming new split EP for you punks and skins! The split features ALTERNATE ACTION from Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada and MARCHING ORDERS from Melbourne, Australia. On side A ALTERNATE ACTION come barreling at you with two full-force skinhead anthems. ALTERNATE ACTION features the deep, gruff singing seasoned skinhead Mr. Greg to grab you by the threat immediately! You will recognize the vocal style from Greg's stint with GLORY STOMPERS, SUBWAY THUGS, and THE AMSTERDAMS. ALTERNATE ACTION showcases Tobias on guitar, Chris on bass, and Matt on drums. The whole crew put their hearts and their musicianship into crafting a refined skinhead product with prominent hooks and memorable guitar riffs. In song one—"Keep Running"—ALTERNATE ACTION sing about cowardly shit-disturbers who "Start the shit and watch the feud / No intentions / You don't move / See through the wall that you put up / Down the road where you belong." Side two is "Dead End Street." ALTERNATE ACTION observes more pathetic human behaviour: "Can't see the error you made / Engulfed by the need to be fed / No control over mind / You can't control your ways." Top-shelf skinhead rock is the currency here!

Side B of this excellent split EP introduces you to MARCHING ORDERS from Australia who cranks out two fucking Oi! hammers for you skins and punks. This shit is powerful chugging Oi!/street music, with lots of bile and bristles and yet the songs remain catchy and tuneful. These guys condemn a "traitor" in song number one who has sealed his fate. "You scoffed at us as you burnt your bridges / You lost the faith / You lost your mind / Now your time is done." An excellent song!

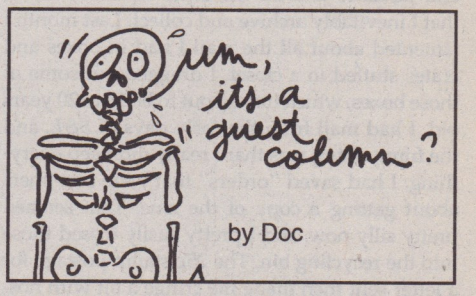
On song two, MARCHING ORDERS makes an intelligent assessment of one man's road to nowhere. This story, drinking to excess can have its pitfalls. Read the lyrics to "Nihilistic": "And another night of violence, drunk out of his mind / He's gonna piss away his money going out all the time / Try to forget his problems with some self-destruction / Fallen to his knees with a bottle of poison / That he don't really care about you / With his nihilistic visions coming true / Yeah, he don't really care about you / When he's drunk and defeated and abused / No he don't really care about you / Another day of sickness passing out on the floor / He's not going to work, he's not working no more / he's given up on life and everything he's doing / He can't see the future through the wreckage and ruin / And he don't really care about you..." Those are some very lucid comments about the perils of the punk rock/skinhead sub-culture! The MARCHING ORDERS deliver their street noise with the melodic hooks that sound as good as *Last Year's Youth* by MENACE in 1977 and the anger not far below the surface! Great!

Fuckin' A! This first rate split is also available in picture disc format! Order this product from Longshot Records, PMB #72, 302 Bedford Ave, Brooklyn, NY 11211, www.longshotmusic.com.

Holy shit! TKO Records from Orange County, California, USA has a raging split CD for you troublemakers! The new product is a mini-CD called *Death Can Wait* featuring COMPLETE CONTROL and the KRUM BUMS. Both bands are from Austin, Texas where punk rock is king. COMPLETE CONTROL comes screaming at you with a full head of steam right from the get-go. With "We Were Dead", this talented gaggle of punks have the melodic punk sound nailed down! The "We Were Dead" song rivals some of CRIMINAL DAMAGE'S new material—and that is high praise! Song two by COMPLETE CONTROL is "Leave Us Alone," with more of the trademark guitar hooks and tight choruses. Very good! Song three is COMPLETE CONTROL covering a KRUM BUMS song, "Cease Fire." Fuck yes! This song chugs along with punk rock urgency and powerful guitar leads!

Next up you have the KRUM BUMS here to ruin your pathetic little world. The servants of Satan lurch right in "In Sickness We Prevail" with desperate vocals and masterful guitar skills. The band sings along to punctuate the song. Song two by the KRUM BUMS is "Misery." The evil spell these fucks operate under is thicker than ever! The goddamn vocals are those of a man possessed! The guitar player weaves an inescapable net of darkness and doom around you. Happy-go-lucky punks, you are out of luck! The final song on this CD is the KRUM BUMS covering COMPLETE CONTROL's "Are You Ready." Very good! For the COMPLETE CONTROL/KRUM BUMS split CD, write to TKO Records, 8941 Atlanta Ave #505, Huntington Beach, CA 92646, www.tkorecords.com.

Until next month—see you fucks at the bar!



"The Doctor Will See You Now"

Man-o-man, my wife and I just saw the most depressing movie I've *ever* seen! *An Inconvenient Truth*. For those of you not familiar with it, *An Inconvenient Truth* deals with the topic of Global Warming. Now I know what "some" of you are saying right now, "Come on, that's a bunch of crap. It doesn't exist." I have an answer for you but you'll have to read on to see what it is.

Anyway, as I was saying, this movie talks about, in a classroom lecture format, the overwhelming evidence of Global Warming and what it can mean for us: *death*. Death to human life and most of animal life on Earth. If that isn't something to get up off your ass and actually care about, *now* is the time you can flip the page to read about your favorite band or maybe get back online and have a little "chit-chat" with your Myspace friends. But for those of you who give a shit please read on...

After leaving the theater my wife and I both felt a little "empty" or maybe helpless inside. At

least I did. What can I do to help? What can *one* person do? What's the point? Well, I'll tell you what *one* person can do. Nothing. Not a damn thing really. But we can,t think in those terms. When faced with such an overwhelming dilemma such as mass extinction we need to think in "extremes." After all it wasn't just one person that got us into this problem. Planet Earth has about 6.5 billion people on it right now and you can really only be responsible for one of them *you*. Only you can make a change about the way you do things. Only you can say, "I *am* going to do something, no matter how little it is, about this. At least I'm going to try." And if enough people feel the same way, that *one* person is now many. That is exactly the attitude that got us here. "Ah, it's no big deal if only one person dumps his oil in street." Or, "what's the harm if I don't recycle, my neighbor does?" The examples of laziness are many and the thing that is so frustrating to me is that it is so fucking easy to do the right thing. In many cases it's actually easier to then to continue to destroy our environment. I guess bad habits are hard to break. Now here's the part I spoke of earlier for those (few I hope) people out there who don't believe there actually is a problem. Let's say this. Let's say if only *half* of what they say in this movie is true. Actually, I'll do you one even better. Let,s say not one point is true. There is no "Global Warming." It's all a set up from "someone" or some "thing." Who that someone is and what their sinister goals are I'm not sure but I bet *you* do. (by the way now is the time to re-wrap that foil on your head so they don't hear your thoughts). My question is this: In either case, what is the harm if we, the human race, actually does try to come up with better cars? Or recycles and re-uses more or thinks about over-population? Is any of that "bad." At the very least more efficient cars (Hybrids) will lessen our dependency on foreign oil (less wars will be fought, trust me) it would also create a whole new business for the failing auto industry (are you listening Ford, GM?) and create more jobs. Recycling actually *makes* money for cities that are smart enough to invest in it. Solar power will save you money. I can't see anything wrong with this in any case. It's like someone that was lucky enough to be born being fit, healthy, eats what he wants and never gains weight. Is it a bad idea if this person still exercises a few days a week?

But the truth is (and it's an overwhelming truth at that) the Earth *is* suffering very much. It's a gigantic place but actually very fragile. Very slight changes can make for *huge* life altering disasters. I won,t get into the science of it. All that info is in the movie and on-line. That's not why I'm writing this column. I want you (yes, *you*) to at least just think about it. Go see this movie if you can. If not, read up on it.

I honestly think it's imperative that we do something about it right *now*. This is not about politics. It's not the Democrats versus the Republicans. It's not about ethnicity or borders, it's about us: The human race. One world and one chance to save it.

On that note, I wanted to give you some examples of things my wife I do. Like I said, there is nothing difficult about any of these. There's no reason why we can't all do something; Just start out small and work your up. It's important to *think* about it and put things in your daily routine.

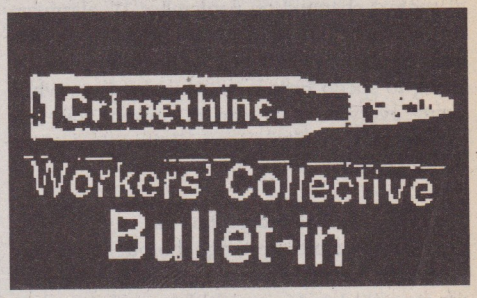
1) Get our cars oil changed on a regular basis
2) Don't buy those small plastic water bottles! Buy *one* cup that you re-use over and over again. Just fill it up with water and take it with you. If you do "have" to have a small plastic water bottle recycle it when you,re done.
3) My wife brings her lunch to work with her. She doesn't use zip-lock baggies but uses re-usable Tupperware instead.
4) Cleaning out your garage? Don't throw away usable items in the trash. Donate to a thrift store. Hell, you even get a tax write-off for it!
5) Try not to go to restaurants that only use paper plates, plastic forks, etc.—you need to think about how much that adds up to. Remember it's not *just* you that eats there.
6) Next time you need a light bulb buy the long life ones.
7) Turn lights out if you're not using them
8) Call your City Hall (I sent an email) ask them "Hey, does our city use natural gas on our buses?" If you don't have your trash service to take Recyclables ask them "Why not?"
9) After you're done reading this issue don't throw it in the trash! Give it to a friend or put it in a recycle bin.
10)Yesterday I dropped off my old cassette deck to get it repaired. The guy said it's going to cost you about the same as if you bought a new one. I still had them fix my old one. Why? Because there's no need in buying a new one and tossing my old one in the trash with all the plastic and rubber parts. It's just a waste.
11) Time for a new car? At the very least test drive a Hybrid. If it works for you, great.
12) Take public transportation, ride share, consolidate trips or ride a bike. I do my best to ride my bike to work at least once a week and when I do need to run errands I do them all in one day. If we can cut back on the amount we start our cars that is the major most important thing to do.
13) I went to Office Max to get some copies made yesterday. I had a lot so I did use a bag to put them in. After I got those I walked next door to PetsMart to get my dog a new toy. They rang me up and started to put it in a *new* bag. I said "I don't need it, I,ll just use my Office Max bag." Wow, how easy is that? *Very*. But these are *exactly* the types of things that can and will make a difference if we all do them.

These are all very simple things and there's no reason why you can't at least try. Once again think in the extremes. If everyone tried to make a change for the positive, even just a little, that would actually make a difference for the good of Earth. On the other hand if everyone did nothing, think of the adverse effect it would have (and has each day).

Let me just leave you with this. All I ask is to please just think about it the next time you get in your car or the next time you buy something that is full of plastic and will be thrown away the next day. Just *think*. Know the consequences of your actions. You don't have to set out change the world. Change yourself and the world will follow. It's now or never.

Take care,
—Doc

PS Please visit www.globalcrisis.net for more info. That's *.net* people.



The beast has been awakened—snarling—and wants to bite someone soon. We fear, not without reason, that it may be us. At this moment the Underground Armies of Barbarian Anarchists are getting scant attention. Still, we are on a very short list. We have recently been considered a genuine threat to national security. We have yet to be linked in any manner to the hijackers and their supporters, despite the obvious advantages that the reactionaries stand to gain by doing so. This will not last forever. We are being given a grace period, to rally around the flag and return to the fold, or else. They will connect the dots or create the dots to connect, and just because many of us are Americans does not mean we are safe.

Thus speculated the CrimethInc. Warbringer cell in *After the Fall*, an analysis published in the wake of the attacks of September 11, 2001. Granted, the FBI has not seriously attempted to link the domestic anarchist movement to actual Islamic terror organizations—that would be too much of a stretch, even for the geniuses who testified at Daniel McGowan's detention hearing that CrimethInc. had published a book about Emma Goldman—but they have taken advantage of the climate of fear to equate sabotage with terrorism, initiating a new campaign against environmental and animal-rights activists. The grace period is over—in May 2005, the FBI announced that it considers the Earth Liberation Front to be domestic terror threat number one—and the government hopes to use this opportunity to settle scores with the anarchist movement in general.

This has been coming all along, of course. Every generation that has succeeded in pushing its resistance past rhetoric into effective action has borne the brunt of state repression. There was no way the FBI was going to let the statute of limitations elapse on the old ELF arsons without charging *someone* with them. Anyone who thought there could be eco-defense without eco-defendants hadn't thought social struggle all the way through.

The first thing we must do in coming to grips with this assault on our community is recognize that it is not an aberration, but something totally predictable and normal—at least, normal in the context of the current absurd social order. Any

effective struggle against the system of domination is going to involve arrests, investigations, and prison terms, not to mention violent attacks from both state forces and vigilantes. These are an intrinsic part of our job description as revolutionary anarchists, whatever tactics we employ on an individual basis. Just as it didn't serve us to throw up our hands in dismay when the global context changed on September 11, alarmism can only hurt us now. Let's calmly familiarize ourselves with the possibility that some of us are going to spend time in court and prison, while doing everything we can to prevent this and maintaining a realistic sense of the extent of the current threat.

The Story Thus Far

It is impossible to provide thorough or timely coverage of every aspect of this subject here, so we urge readers to consult these websites: ecoprisoners.org, www.greenscare.org, fbiwitchhunt.org, and especially http://portland.indymedia.org/en/topic/greenscare/. For basic context, we'll present a short summary as of this writing, but please don't stop here.

Most activists date the latest wave of repression, popularly termed the "green scare," from December 7, 2005, when the FBI carried out a series of raids around the US. Further arrests and indictments followed, until a total of fourteen people were charged with various counts of arson, destruction of property, and conspiracy in what was dubbed "Operation Backfire." Of these, Joseph Dibee, Josephine Overaker, and Rebecca Rubin are thought to be in hiding outside the US, while William Rodgers allegedly committed suicide in his jail cell on the winter solstice. Stanislas Meyerhoff, Kevin Tubbs, Chelsea Dawn Gerlach, Suzanne Savoie, and Kendall Tankersley are believed to be cooperating with the government—i.e., offering to testify against others in hopes of receiving lighter sentences. The entire case of the FBI seems to have initially been based on the testimony of one heroin addict, Jacob Ferguson, so the decision of others to cooperate with the state is particularly troubling. Daniel McGowan, Jonathan Paul, and Briana Waters are currently free on outrageously high bail, while Joyanna Zacher and Nathan Block have been denied bail as a result of the testimony of informants. The trial is cartoonishly scheduled for Halloween, October 31, 2006.

The following month, Zachary Jenson, Lauren Weiner and Eric McDavid were arrested in Auburn, California for allegedly conspiring to commit actions on behalf of the ELF. They were set up by an FBI agent provocateur, "Anna," who was sleeping with one of them; apparently she bought bomb-making materials and rented a bugged house for them. Apparently "Anna" had been traveling in anarchist circles since summer of 2004, attending two CrimethInc. convergences and a host of other events (in the muddled words of FBI flunky Nasson Walker, "The s/he has provided information that has been utilized in at least twelve separate anarchist cases."). Lauren was released into house arrest on $1.2 million bail, and subsequently pleaded guilty and agreed to testify against the others—an infuriating development when her codefendants were starving in isolation cells. Two months later, the very night this article was finished, Zachary was reported to have just done the same thing.

In March, six activists associated with the animal rights group Stop Huntingdon Animal Cruelty, which has driven an animal testing corporation to the brink of bankruptcy, were found guilty on charges of using their website to incite attacks on Huntingdon Life Sciences and their business partners. Some of them face up to eleven years in prison for making use of their supposed right to free speech.

All the while, grand juries—secretive government interrogation organs established to gather information about alleged crimes—have convened around the country, indicting anyone with connections to activist communities, jailing those who won't speak, and nosing around for further leads in the war on dissent. FBI agents have announced that anarchist groups such as Food Not Bombs and Indymedia are near the top of their terror watch list. Whether or not anarchists are ready for it, we are now being targeted as public enemy number one.

Together, these various cases spell out a cohesive message: *Don't act; you will be caught. Don't associate with dissidents, you will be framed. Don't trust your comrades, you will be infiltrated. Don't speak about others' actions, you will be imprisoned.*

This message is the most important part of the FBI campaign. Even with all the anti-terror funding in the world, they can't infiltrate every anarchist circle and pin charges on every prominent activist. They hope that, by staging this massive display of force, they can intimidate the rest of us into silence and passivity, just as the excessive and unsustainable police presence at the FTAA protests in Miami November 2003 was calculated to put an end to the era of anarchist mass mobilizations by giving an inflated impression of the power of the state.

The Radical Response

Participation in anarchist legal aid and prisoner support projects has increased over the past months, though not yet enough to exert a great influence over the course of events. This increase is ironic, given that a year ago some of those now targeted by the state were trying to figure out how to reinvigorate prisoner support in North America. The pivotal question now is whether or not anarchist organizers, so used to working in the limited context of their own communities, will be able to muster widespread public outrage over this witch-hunt. Without that, this round may end badly for the accused, and that will encourage the authorities to initiate another roundup.

It is of the utmost importance that those currently being targeted receive the funding and community support necessary for the best possible legal defense. As on every other front, every inch should cost our persecutors as much as possible, whether or not we win individual battles. Good legal support has proven indispensable in keeping mass actions viable; for example, the legal defense and countersuits following the protests against the IMF meeting in Washington, DC in 2002 not only cleared hundreds of protesters of charges, but also tied the hands of the DC police for several protests to come. The struggle in the courtroom is not the postscript to the struggle in the street, but that struggle conducted by different means; it is not the end of the story unless we give up and make it so. The same goes for the struggle in prison, for those serving sentences: a community cannot foster long-term commitment to militant struggle unless it supports its prisoners of war; conversely, those prisoners have power to the extent to which their comrades outside maintain enough momentum to exert social and political leverage.

While we're at it, let's postulate a few other lessons from the initial phase of this wave of repression. First, every activist group should be prepared to be targeted, and have resources (a lawyer, money, a network of potential supporters) and a game plan ready. Second, in times of increased surveillance and repression, we must be cautious without letting fear immobilize us. We're powerful because we act, and because we're connected to others; being frightened into passivity and isolation can only weaken and endanger us. Third, now more than ever solidarity means constructive criticism, not speculations ("That arson? I bet that was Alphonse—he's into macho tactics") or accusations ("She never does anything—she's just a lot of talk"). You never know what situation a person is in: she might be a wanted fugitive who can't respond to your thoughtless words without endangering herself. Likewise, "innocent" activists may be accused of others' actions, and even go to prison for them; but this is the fault of the government, not on the ones who act, so long as they don't stupidly put others at risk. Finally, much of the evidence in recent cases is based on informants wearing microphones into conversations. Activists should consider the possibility that even trusted companions could be wired; don't ever reminisce needlessly over past illegal actions, don't assume old cases are closed even after a decade of silence, don't work with people you're not sure you'll trust ten years from now. Meet a person's family and friends before joining in illegal activity.

And above all, *don't talk to police or the FBI.* No matter what, it can never help you. They wouldn't ask you in the first place if they didn't need your help to ruin your life. Remember: *"I am going to remain silent. I would like to speak with an attorney."*

The Enemy Within

Brutal assaults from the state should come as no surprise. The most troubling aspect of this story is that some of those arrested—and even some who were not arrested, who are not even facing the threat of life in prison—have agreed to speak to the authorities, putting others at grievous risk.

Imagine the situation of an activist who has agreed to testify against her former comrades. All the experiences that made her an anarchist, from childhood on, come back to haunt her as she betrays her own values and commitments,

siding with the bullies, the rapists, the snide executives and sadistic police. Whatever tremendous feats she has accomplished, whatever personal qualities she took pride in, now she will be remembered as an informant and must live with the knowledge that she is one.

In return for the potential of one day rejoining the defeated herd she fought so hard to escape, she must tell herself the same lies that once outraged her: that people are essentially selfish and untrustworthy, that complicity in injustice is inevitable and acceptable, that one has to simply look out for number one in a disastrously unsustainable world. She does not even know how much leniency she can expect; the government can hardly let her off the hook when they've worked so hard to find her. On the other hand, as a snitch, she can be sure that if she goes to prison her fellow inmates will terrorize her. This gives the state even more power over her. Perhaps she considers breaking off collaboration, but to do so would only leave her isolated from all directions; the die is already cast. One can hardly imagine a worse position to be in.

Let us phase out the masked figure lobbing a Molotov cocktail as the idealized image of revolt; there is a time for that, and the sooner it comes back around the better, but it is not the ultimate stage of struggle. Henceforth, when we think of resistance at its most courageous and romantic, let us picture someone like ourselves in an interrogation chamber, not masked but handcuffed, being threatened with life and death in captivity and still refusing to render herself and her fellows into her enemies' hands.

Facing the threat of incarceration, we must redefine freedom and safety as factors under our control, not external circumstances. Freedom is not a matter of how many fences happen to be around you, but of following the dictates of your conscience no matter what. Safety is not the condition of being temporarily outside the grasp of your enemies, but of trusting yourself enough to know that your friends will never come to harm because of you and you will never become something you despise.

We Can Win: Success Stories from the Struggle against Repression

Not only is it critical to fight in the courtrooms as well as the streets—it's also possible to win those fights. A brief look at our own recent history shows countless cases in which activists have beaten charges and even come out ahead in counter-suits. Such victories not only discourage our enemies from taking us to court, they can also provide needed resources for further organizing. Throwing up one's hands in panic as soon as someone gets arrested is not only counterproductive; it's also needlessly pessimistic. To offset the doomsaying of the inexperienced and easily demoralized, let's reflect on a couple recent victories won by activists forced to fight within the legal system.

At the Republican National Convention in Philadelphia summer of 2000, Camilo Viveiros and two others were beaten and arrested by a group of police that included John Timoney, then Police Commissioner of Philadelphia. Charged with numerous felonies (as a rule, you always get charged by the police for whatever they do to you) and demonized as violent extremists, the activists came to be known as the Timoney Three; Camilo himself faced more than 37 years in prison and $55,000 in fines. They awaited trial for four years, while Timoney jet-setted around the world giving presentations on how to repress protesters and serving as Chief of Police in Miami during the FTAA ministerial in 2003. It seemed certain that anyone charged with assaulting someone in such a position of power was doomed to go to prison. Yet when the trial finally came, Timoney and the other officers made fools of themselves, offering wildly conflicting testimonies; after the defense presented a videotape that revealed the testimony of the police to be mere fabrication, the three were declared innocent of all charges. In an excellent article the March-April 2006 issue of the *Earth First!* journal, Camilo outlined the lessons of that trial for those currently facing government repression.

One of the most important trials of the preceding generation of environmental activism ended in an unconditional victory over the mendacious, murderous authorities. In 1990, Judi Bari and Darryl Cherney were nearly killed by a car bomb while on a speaking tour to promote resistance to corporate logging. Rather than investigating the bombing, the FBI charged the two with making and transporting bombs. They also took advantage of the opportunity to carry out a nationwide smear campaign against Earth First!, and sent agents to create dossiers on over 500 activists associated with the organization. To this day, it remains unclear whether the bombing was the work of freelance vigilantes or of the FBI themselves—in the weeks before it, FBI agents instructed the local police on how to make bombs exactly like the one that nearly killed Judi and Darryl. The charges failed to hold up in court, and the two initiated a counter-suit against the FBI and Oakland Police Department. Although the FBI managed to delay the trial for almost eleven years, during which Judi, who was crippled by the bombing, died of cancer, Darryl and others continued pressing the suit. Finally, in 2002, a jury found the FBI and Oakland Police guilty and ordered them to pay $4.4 million in damages.

When the struggle in the courtroom fails, there are always other means of resistance. In 1979, Black freedom fighter Assata Shakur broke out of maximum-security prison with the assistance of three comrades. All the guards taken hostage in the action were released unharmed, and she escaped safely to Cuba to raise her daughter and write her autobiography. She still lives there today.

Our Strategy from Here

This is a somewhat quiet phase of resistance in this country, as everyone waits out the end of the Bush presidency; we can afford to focus a lot of energy on benefit events, prisoner support groups, and public outreach. When things heat up again, we'll benefit from having done this work, and in the meantime it offers us a rallying point.

In addition to supporting our targeted comrades, we have to protect the infrastructure of our community. In Italy, where the brutal state repression of the past decade has succeeded in paralyzing many of those who bottom-lined anarchist projects, police and fascists have been able to shut down some of the social centers, publications, and protest campaigns that formed the life's blood of a vibrant anarchist movement. We must not allow that to happen here. The government will target those who are most active and visible; when one of us is immobilized by legal problems, it's up to the rest of us to take up the slack. Our infrastructure is not just made up of formally organized groups; it also consists of and depends on our social networks and culture of resistance. If people cease to come together at politicized entertainment events and community potlucks, or cease to work through conflicts and share emotional support, that will be just as devastating as the loss of an infoshop or Food Not Bombs.

As for our proactive tactics, how should we adjust them in the light of this offensive? It's worth pointing out that, with the exception of Rob Thaxton, no anarchist in recent memory has served more than a couple years in prison for participation in mass actions—this is impressive, given the high level of confrontation these have sometimes reached. It seems to be harder to make charges stick in mass action scenarios, perhaps because they involve so many suspects and so much chaos, and also because investigating them at great length would overextend the resources of the state. The police are forced to grab whomever they can—usually not people who had any major role in the actions—and charge them with crimes for which there is little evidence.

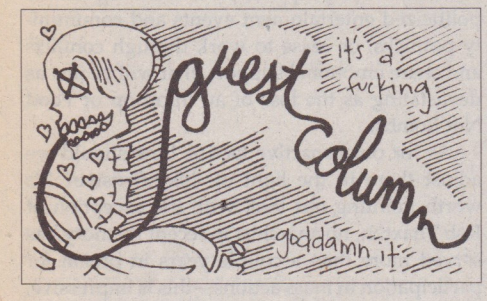
Ironically, in the wake of September 11, anarchists backed off militant mass actions in fear that they would meet stiffer repression. Consequently, we have less leverage and morale—and we are still being targeted as domestic enemy number one! The FBI and the whole apparatus of repression are after us whether or not we skulk around in the shadows, so we may as well organize openly. If we're all headed for court anyway, we have little to lose, and we stand to gain much-needed visibility and momentum. If enough of us stick our necks out, they can't target us all, and the more people of all walks of life are familiar with our struggle the more allies we can hope to find. Now is the time to form accessible anarchist structures, to speak publicly about our opposition to capitalism and domination, to organize large-scale anarchist actions. Far from endangering us, this may actually make us *safer*.

As for those who prefer more covert tactics such as arson and sabotage, the clearest lesson of the current phase of repression is that the government is interested above all in mapping networks of resistance. If you are not connected to the current pool of suspects, doing as your conscience dictates is no more dangerous now than it was a decade ago, provided you practice flawless security culture and pick prudent comrades

who will never buckle under pressure. Indeed, as the trials of the current defendants play out over the coming months, we will be given valuable insight into how the FBI investigates crimes of this nature. This should, if anything, make it easier for activists to engage safely in militant direct action.

Our enemies are wrong to hypothesize that we can be frightened into passivity. If the prospect of living in a world of domination and despair was bad enough to catalyze us into action, think how much less appealing it is to be silent knowing our comrades can be taken from us at any time. As they escalate this conflict, we can only respond in kind.

For more ammunition, tune to www.crimethinc.com.



By Kyle Crawford

The talk that needed to happen between Jonny and I finally did. The last couple years have been tough on those of us closest to him, having to watch him go in and out of jail, high as fuck on drugs then back down. It breaks our hearts everyday but none of us knew how to change anything so those rare moments in his company were spent convincing ourselves he was alright and letting/forcing the truth to slip to the backs of our minds. When I did run into him sitting on the brown couch without any cushions on my friend Skyler's porch one night, he told me I'd caught him on his 46th day of being drunk in a row. He told me with pride glimmering in his glazed-over eyes and a grin spread across his face, waiting for my reply. He was anticipating a "Fuck yeah! That's rad." Har dee har har.

I told him, "This shit's gotta end at some point, you know that."

But he did know it, and that time wasn't now so the idea could just be forgotten. The time is never now. Instead we wait for that mythical moment of change. We want to be there when change takes place, but all those difficult moments leading up to it are a lot less romantic.

This wasn't the talk we finally had. This is where I backed down like numerous times before and numerous times since. This is where I fall apart inside and let the subject change so he'll smile his old smile for me and I can forget about it.

Last time I saw Jonny I'd finally given up hope for him, something I never thought I could do. He wouldn't talk about anything important, but instead waited to be drunk enough to yell about how he doesn't "give a fuck! Yeah I smoke crack and meth. And I love it."

Nice.

Back in town now, I've got an agenda. The letter that I finally penned the second night in my cold room, that never left my notebook. I finally put it all down so I'd know I had at least tried, but I never let myself send it. I wanted to know I wasn't just giving up on this kid like I wanted to. Like we all wanted to.

To get him to finally talk with me, I asked him to ditch the show to go for a walk, even though it was a band we both loved. Back in high school I stole the band's shirt from a friend and the two of us stole it back and forth from each other. I saw him outside the show, standing with his bangs pulled over the right side of his face, covering his eye and bloodied skin from the night before. He'd gotten in a drunken fight and had his head bashed over a toilet hard enough for the porcelain bowl to break. And now he's trying to justify it to me and anybody else around.

He wants us to know he held his own. That he got in some good punches. He didn't lose.

"That doesn't fucking matter Jonny," I tell him. I really want to slap him and get him to shut up. I want him to realize that his words are laden with ego and defensiveness, but I don't think he'll let himself see it.

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You can't eat t-shirts. Or records. Or zines.

You can't play records or CDs or even mp3s without electronics from some company, probably made for pennies just like the wages of the farm workers who picked the food you eat, even if it you did find it in a garbage.

Our lives are not simply the commodities we offer to our community and the world and we *have* to understand that.

And it's because of the fact we're a microcosm of much larger acting powers that we can't ignore it. Especially because of the privilege we possess, is it necessary to look at the ways in which we can put these ethics we've learned from punk and similar cultures to the best possible use. As important as it is to create a strong subculture, we have equal responsibility to extend our energies to our communities at large.

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Jonny points left and right as we walk through alleys we've both been down a hundred times. If he wasn't talking I'd be telling him all the little stories from this area. Little tidbits of things I found and conversations with different people at every hour of the day. I'd tell him about the times me and Daniel used to sneak up to the bank drive-thru in the middle of the day to skate the ledge for a few minutes, then disappear down this same alley.

But he's pointing and talking and his stories aren't anything like mine, or at least I manage to distance myself from them somehow. I suppose it's some psychological self-preservation tactic.

This is where he came when he was coming down off drugs really bad. Stopping behind bushes to try to sleep but being in such shitty shape that he'd have to stand up and start walking again. I look to each place Jonny gestures to, trying not to let him see me doing it. He's still trying to brag about all this to me but I'm thankful he's at least telling me these things. These are his realities lately. Mine aren't anything like his, even though I had just gotten back from traveling for a few months, sleeping behind bushes just like he's been doing. But it's not the same at all and there's no use pretending like it is.

Jonny takes a last sip off the beer he's been downing and throws it into a bush. I tell him to go pick it up and throw it away. You know, use some common sense. He just laughs that old laugh of his, too cool to care but thankful to be held to some sort of standard. I walk over and pick out the Pabst can from the bush and walk it over to him, where he's looking at me, realizing I'm still as big of a dork as when he used to know me. We walk to a garbage can and he throws it away, that smirk still on his face.

In the parking lot I take some pictures of him, but his smirk fades as he tries to stand proud, bangs still covering his right eye.

Back at the show, he heads inside and I talk to the punk girl holding a carriage holding her baby. She's a girl I met a couple years ago when I handed her a flier for a DIY Day in the Park I was organizing. She was genuinely excited about it but never showed up.

But looking at her here, I think about how little a DIY Day matters at all. I don't want to spend my time screenprinting T-shirts when there are mothers in need of assistance. I want our time to be spent creating sustainable and stable livelihoods for ourselves and our kids. I want Jonny to be able to get drug treatment and be supported. I want our ethics to be used to their greatest potential, for the punks and not.

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On Monday, August 21, Tower Records filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy for the second time in two years. Under the terms of their current claim, the chain has now 60 days to find someone to buy the business. While the company hopes to keep its stores open in the meantime, it remains to be seen if any buyer can afford to run Tower without massive closures and major restructuring.

I'm not quite sure what the readership of *Maximum Rocknroll* might make of this news. Surely many punks, especially either those in a major city or college town with access to one or more independent record stores, or those with a good internet connection, could at the very least care less that a large multinational corporate music retailer is going out of business; I know personally I haven't set foot in a Tower in years. But on the other hand, hundreds of *MRR*s are shipped to (and sold in) Tower Records stores across the country. To paraphrase one longtime shitworker, it is part of *Maximum Rocknroll*'s mission to be there on the shelves of stores like Tower next to all the corporate rock magazines, to provide a ready

alternative to the young kid who might be bored with the mainstream bullshit propagated by the likes of *Spin* or *Rolling Stone*.

Regardless, events such as this cause ripples throughout the music world at large, affecting everyone from the owners of and investors in Tower, down to their cashiers and warehouse workers, and through to any small label who has ever told to them. *Maximum* will surely be hit with substantial and costly returns in the coming months. I also work for one of the last remaining independent record distributors in the country—it's my source of income as well as my health care provider—and they too will be affected to some degree by the fallout.

I read Tower's official statement regarding what they believe brought their business to the brink of collapse over the last few years, but I'm quite sure they could place a fair amount of blame on the internet. Not only are more and more people purchasing CDs, DVDs, and such online from mail-order companies like Amazon.com, but music consumption itself has changed drastically with the advent of the iPod and the popularization of digital music files. In many ways, the same thing can be said for print media. Instead of buying and reading newspapers and magazines (or punk zines), people are increasingly getting their information on the internet (for free), communicating through blogs and messageboards.

Since the time when critics declared that the invention of the 33 rpm LP would forever ruin the listening experience because people wouldn't be forced to pay attention to get up and flip the record every couple minutes, history has been full of those claiming that the latest technological innovation would destroy music. I don't want to be one of them. Nevertheless, it's important to think about what punk music culture might look like in the internet age. While not everyone can afford internet access, those that can have a wealth of information at their fingertips, provided they know what to look for. In addition, nearly everything, from the rarest cult record to the latest new release (Tragedy's new LP was being exchanged on the internet days, probably hours, after it came out; Fucked Up's double LP is downloadable even though it has yet to be released) is potentially available for free on the internet. Filesharing for large sound files is simple with sites like YouSendIt, and even videos are becoming common thanks to YouTube.

As has been addressed in these pages and elsewhere already, the speed of things has increased to an extreme degree. With the help of message boards and everyone's desire to stay on top of the latest must-have, a record can be released and sell out in a matter of days. While it's good that more bands than ever are writing, recording, and releasing music (though, in this retro- and "soundalike"-obsessed climate, it's sometimes of dubious merit—though that's potentially the subject of a whole 'nother column at least), sometimes it feels like the continuous frenzy to consume product, buying records not to "miss out" as opposed to actually listen repeatedly to them, means that each individual one has less impact and bands are "yesterday's news" by their second EP.

More and more, it's possible to interact with the punk scene entirely through the internet. Are mp3s replacing records, blogs replacing zines, messageboards and MySpace replacing going to shows and making actual friends in real life? I can help but feel like things are more superficial this way. With the instantaneous, temporary nature of the internet, there's no permanent document of our culture—or at least one worth saving. In other words, it's interesting to dig out and reread an old zine, but will people have the same feeling for messageboard threads from years ago?

Anyway, I really don't think anyone can change the way things are headed, wherever that may be. I don't want to come off as an alarmist; no matter what the medium, punk at its core will be the same as it ever was. I don't want to seem like someone always complaining that "things ain't what they used to be," either. The truth is, I'm much more excited about bands around and records coming out these days than I was five years ago. And furthermore, I think the more boring, stagnant, and complacent things become in the punk scene, the more potential there is for someone to start something new that really fucks things up.

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P.S. If anyone has any opinion on what I've written about, especially a dissenting one—please, write the magazine. I know letter-writing is a dying art now that people can just post online, but I'd love have other people's thoughts published here too.

Every people perpetrate their own myths, and allow them to repeat and grow until they are as vast as they can be, on and on in perpetuity, or at least as long as the people themselves have a lifespan. This is how fables—with characters and moral centers—are born out of actual lives, and whether they be passed down through the delicate folklore of mother to child or through the nebulous but tangible means of public discourse, they exist in all cultures large and small.

Modern mythology—and with it common perceptions of the world—aren't dangerous as a matter of course. Even at their most awkwardly sentimental, some stories-turned-allegory can actually be sort of sweet, if maudlin. Here's one that always gets me, the one of Pee Wee Reese putting his arm around new Dodger Jackie Robinson to claim him as a teammate in the face of unabashed American public hostility in Jackie's first year in the big leagues. Even though it happened in a city I've never visited (Cincinnati) close to a half century before I was born—the same year my father was born in the Shah's Iran to a family justifiably ignorant of the ups and downs of American professional baseball—I have a warm (if borrowed) picture of this famous moment clear in my mind. I can't help it, I love baseball, though I know I should know better to buy into Americans' love of creating folklore to prove to ourselves that maybe we aren't so racist after all.

Here's another one that gets me, a different kind of a legend altogether. Without fail, almost in a predetermined way, I cry when Nasser[1] dies in novels or films set in modern Egypt. Only a few years after the humiliation of 1967 Arab-Israeli war—said to be the heartbreak that brought Nasser to his deathbed—and with the writing on the wall for modern Arab secularism, Nasser's death was to many a real, physical manifestation of the moment the dream of Arab autonomy turned to delusion, not yet (if ever) to be realized. It is easy to empathize with the loss of hope that must have followed the actual loss of this man, even if you, like me, know history better than to put a politician (a moderate progressive at that) on an unassailable pedestal.

American political mythology is boring in comparison. The Kennedy family and George Washington not being able to tell a lie don't really speak to the needs of we the people, so for many of us these stories have lost their currency, though we still know them. How can we help it?—the stories are repeated again and again, Jackie O and JFK's photos plastered on magazine covers year after year. I don't need to tell you that this kind of force-fed fantasy (whether it be the centered around JFK, Nasser, George W., or Ahmadinejad) has the power to become profoundly dangerous, and to move ordinary men into blind hatred, fear, and killing, or into handing over hard earned and well-deserved rights.

This kind of cultural melodrama isn't lost on the punks. You don't have to look much further than per-zine culture too see how starry eyed punk signifiers have almost totally come to stand in for life experience for some folks. Hopped a train? Dumpster dived? Gotten drunk outside of the show? Written a wince-inducing zine out of it? Don't worry, you are so painfully not alone, and through your incessant writing we have *all* been there with you. In this case, two-dimensional romanticism isn't the impetus behind nationalistic fervor or the drive to war, but it does make for some insanely bad writing, which is not a crime exactly, but it can sure feel like a punishment to we lowly zine readers and reviewers.

Allegory can teach us lessons about ourselves and each other, and good storytellers have the power to move us by working certain stories just so. Nonetheless, we should be wary of unchecked sentimentalism, because often it amounts to little more than propaganda attempting to manipulate our natural human desires. What's more, that shit can be boring. So tell stories, and as importantly, listen what other people are telling you—especially now when governments want to bulldoze us into believing that they know why certain people act how they

do—but don't let the moral be a predetermined thing, because that is not how history works, nor should it be.

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Punkers, get in touch! I do write back, eventually: golnar@maximumrocknroll.com

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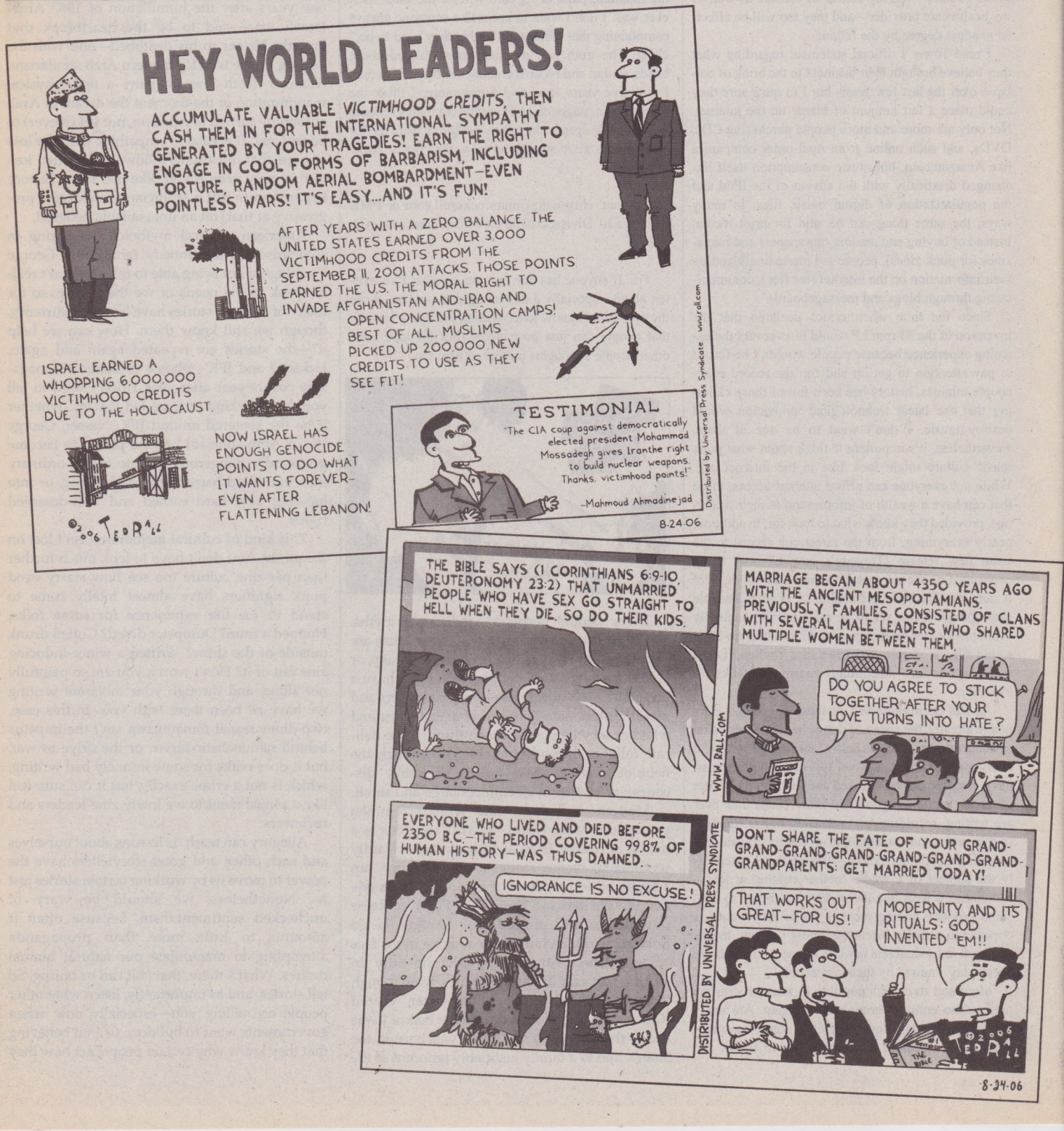
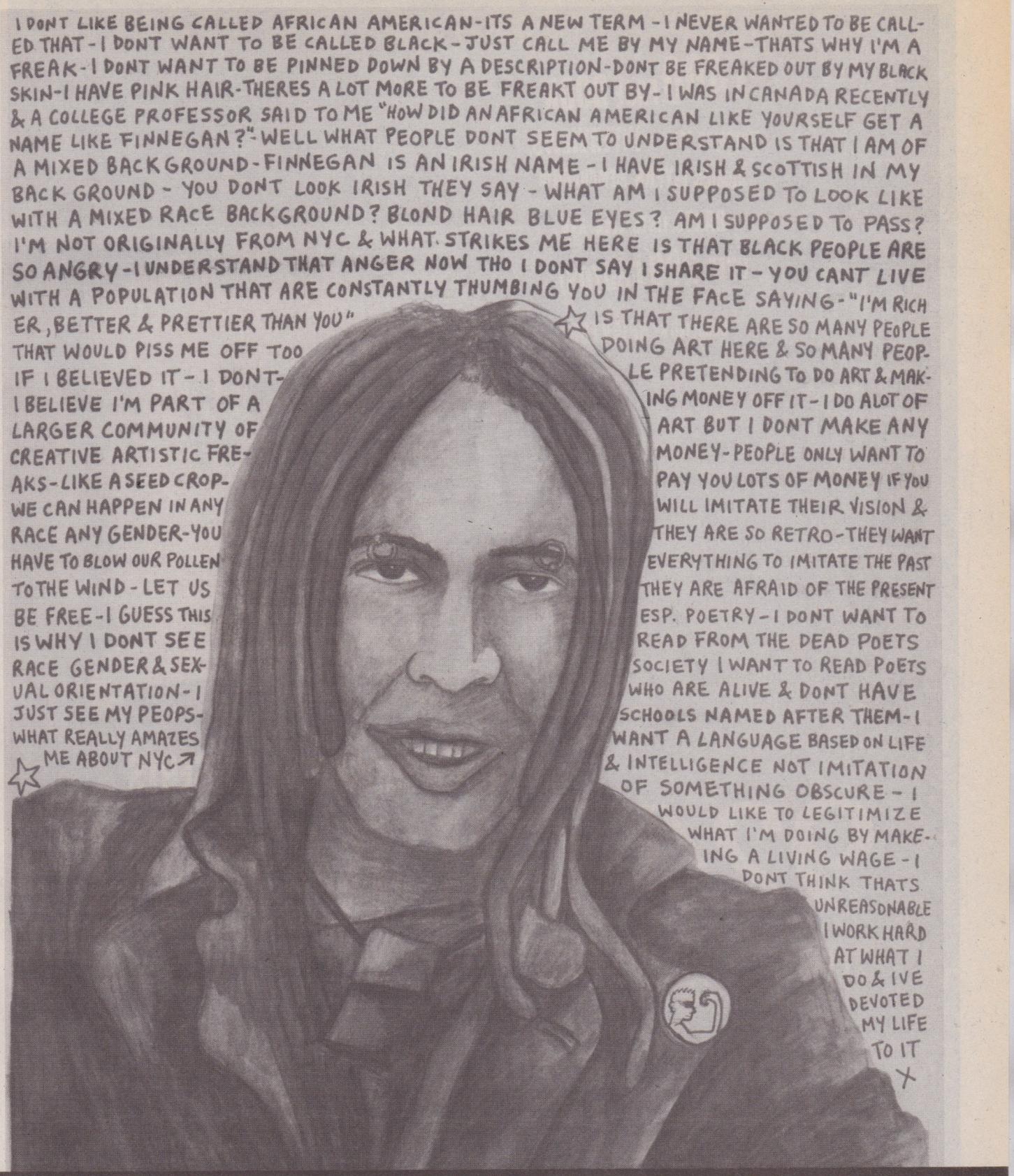
Listen to: Olho Seco, Void, Wretched.
Read: The fucking newspaper.

[1] From Wikipiedia: "Gamel abd al Nasser was the leader of Egypt from 1954 until his death in 1970. He is considered one of the most important Arab politicians in modern times, and is especially well-known for his Arab nationalist and anti-colonial foreign policy. The pan-Arabist ideology named after him, Nasserism, won a large following throughout the Arab world in the 1950s and 1960s, and though its importance declined after his death, he is still seen throughout the Arab World as a symbol for Arab dignity and freedom."

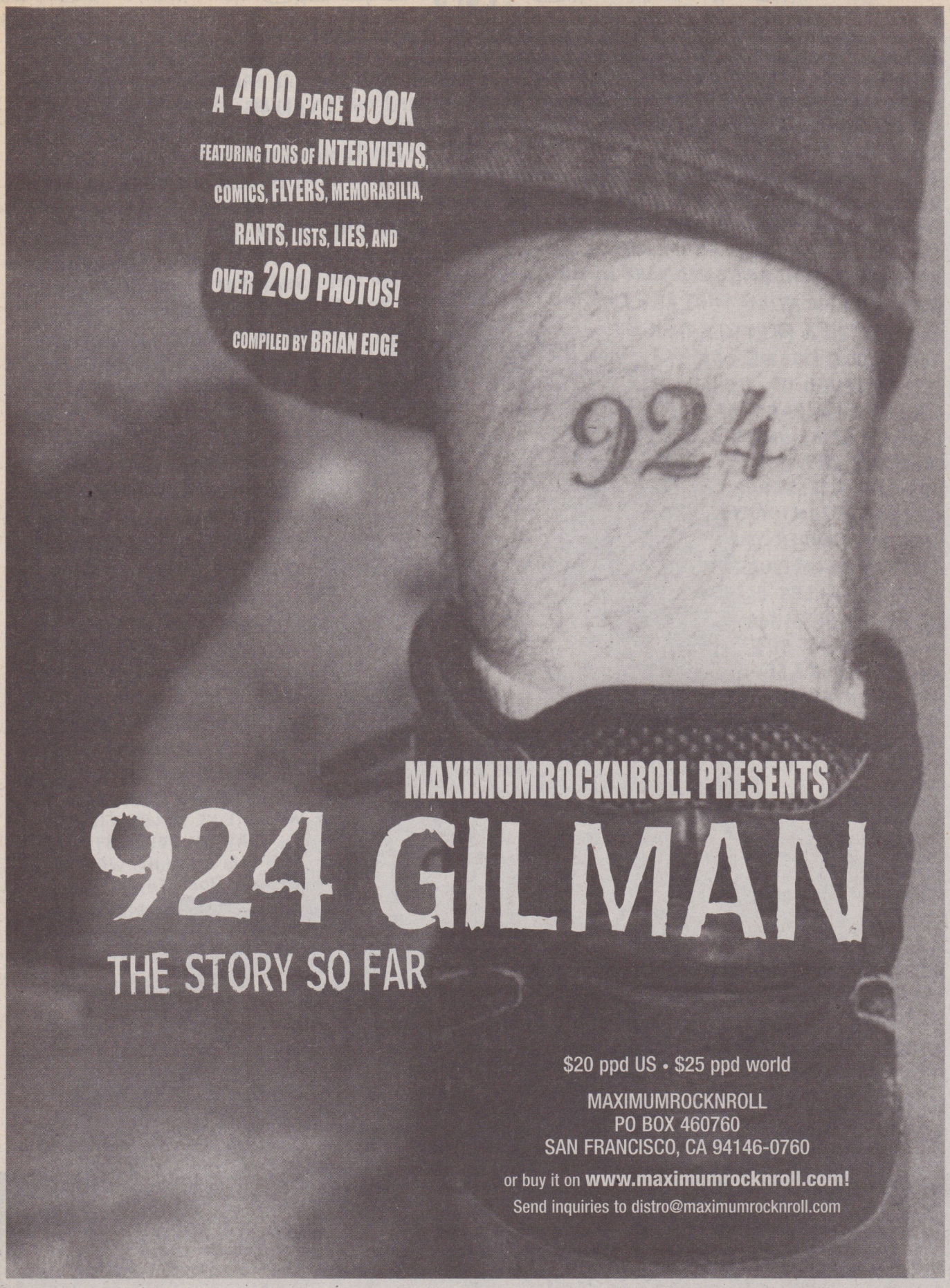


PEOPS



Finnegan – January 2K2 – Lower East Side – NYC

I first met Finnegan probably in 1989 or 1990 at ABC No Rio in NYC – he was still in high school then I think & he was part of a group of amazing kids who did spoken word performances & were called the Dark Star Collective – they were all really smart & really street smart & they just blew me away everytime I saw them – since then Finnegan has continued to write & perform (at one point he even let me read part of a science fiction novel he was working on which I really liked but I'm not sure if he ever finished it) & he is currently traveling the world – I sometimes get emailed elaborate updates of his adventures – Finnegan is a visually stunning & mentally stimulating creature – if you want to contact him you could email me & I will forward it to contact Fly email fly@bway.net (put *MRR* in the subject so I know its not spam) – *PEOP(le)s* #3 & #2 zines are currently available for $5 each (pp in the USA) – write to Fly PO Box Cooper Stn NYC NY10276 – I will be traveling a lot in September & October so please be patient with late deliveries.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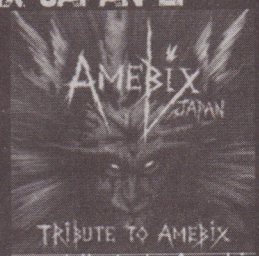

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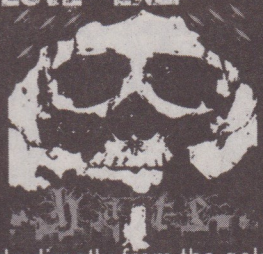

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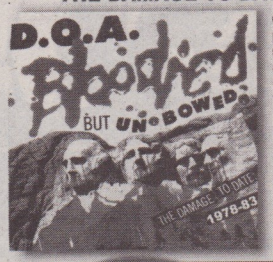

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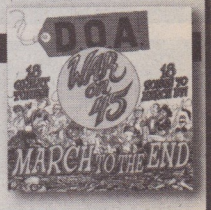

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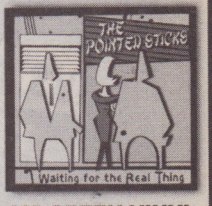

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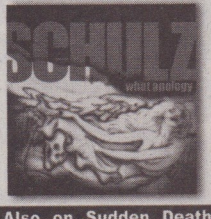

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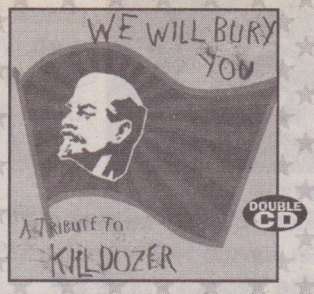

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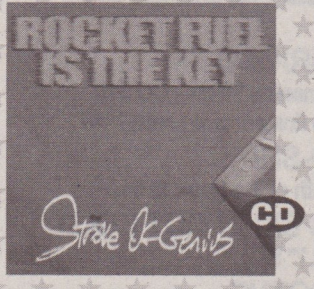

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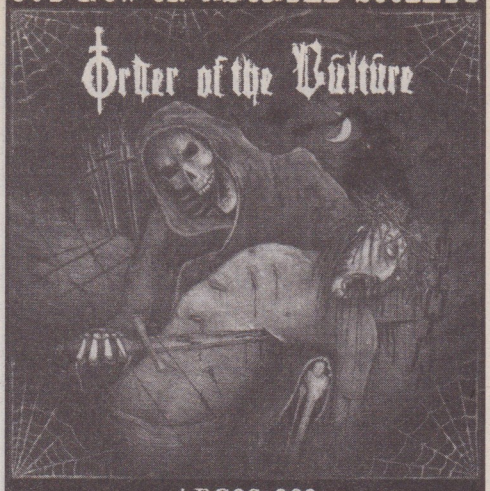

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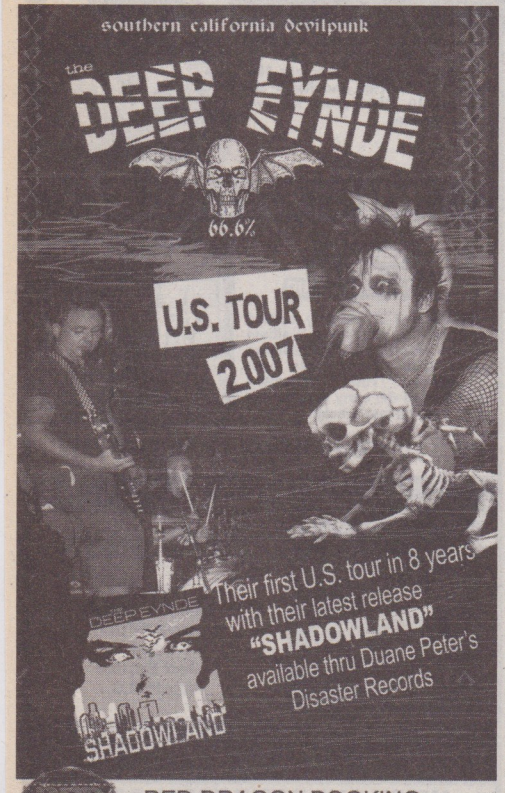

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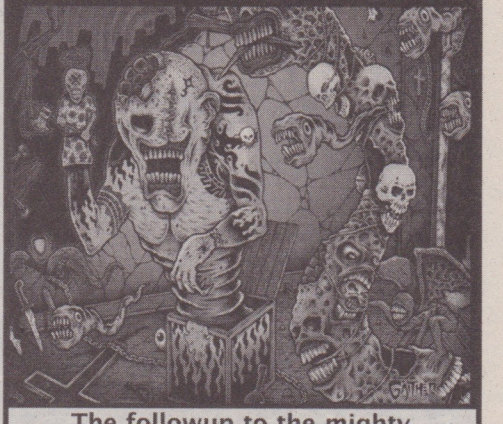

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MRR NEWS

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A DISASTER TO TAKE EVERYONE'S BREATH AWAY

From an article in the *New Zealand Herald* By Geoffrey Lean

Deep in the heart of the world's greatest rainforest, a nine-day journey by boat from the sea, Otavio Luz Castello is anxiously watching the soft waters of the Amazon drain away. Every day they recede further, like water running slowly out of an immense bathtub, threatening a worldwide catastrophe. Standing on an island in a quiet channel of the giant river, he points out what is happening. A month ago, the island was under water. Now, it juts 5m above it.

It is a sign that severe drought is returning to the Amazon for a second successive year. And that would be ominous. New research suggests that one further dry year beyond that could tip the whole vast forest into a cycle of destruction. The day before, top scientists delivered much the same message at a remarkable floating symposium on the Rio Negro, on the strange black waters beside which Manaus, the capital city of the Amazon, stands.

They told the meeting—convened on a flotilla of boats by Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew of the Greek Orthodox Church, dubbed the "green Pope" for his environmental activism—that global warming and deforestation were pushing the entire enormous area towards a "tipping point," where it would start to die. The consequences would be awesome. The wet Amazon Basin would turn to dry savannah at best, desert at worst. This would cause much of the world to become hotter and drier.

In the long term, it could send global warming out of control, eventually making the world uninhabitable. Nowhere could seem further from the world's problems than the idyllic spot where Otavio Luz Castello lives. The young naturalist's home is a chain of floating thatched cottages making up a research station in the Mamiraua Reserve, halfway between Manaus and Brazil's border with Colombia.

Rare pink river dolphin play in the tranquil waters around the cottages, kingfishers dive into them, giant, bright butterflies zig-zag across them and squirrel monkeys romp in the trees on their banks. There is little to suggest that it may be witnessing the first scenes of an apocalypse. The rivers of the Amazon Basin usually routinely fall 9m to 12m—greater than most of the tides of the world's seas—between the wet and dry seasons. But last year they just went on falling in the worst drought in recorded history.

At one point in the western Brazilian state of Acre, the world's biggest river shrank so far that it was possible to walk across it. Millions of fish died, and thousands of communities whose only transport was by water were stranded.

And the drying forest caught fire; in September, satellite camera images showed 73,000 blazes in the basin. This year, says Otavio Luz Castello, the water is draining away even faster than last year—and there are still more than three months of the dry season to go. It is much the same all over Amazonia. In the Jau National Park, 18 hours by boat up the Rio Negro from Manaus, local people who took me out by canoe at dawn found it impossible to get to places they had reached without trouble just the evening before.

Acre received no rain for 40 days recently, and sandbanks are beginning to surface in its rivers. Flying over the forest—with trees in a thousand shades of green stretching, for hour after hour, as far as the eye can see—it seems inconceivable that anything could endanger its verdant immensity. Until recently, scientists took the same view, seeing it as one of the world's most stable environments.

Though they condemned the way that, on average, an area roughly the size of Wales is cut down each year, this did not seem to endanger the forest as a whole, much less the planet. Now they are changing their minds in the face of increasing evidence that deforestation is pushing the Amazon and the world to the brink of disaster.

Dr Antonio Nobre, of Brazil's National Institute of Amazonian Research, told the floating symposium of unpublished research which suggests that the felling was drying up the entire forest and helping to cause the hurricanes that have been battering the United States and the Caribbean. The hot, wet Amazon, he explained, normally evaporates vast amounts of water, which rise high into the air as if in an invisible chimney, drawing in wet northeast trade winds, which have picked up moisture from the Atlantic.

This, in turn, controls the temperature of the ocean—as the trade winds pick up the moisture, the warm water left gets saltier and sinks. Deforestation disrupts the cycle by weakening the Amazonian evaporation which drives the whole process. One result is that the hot water in the Atlantic stays on the surface and fuels the hurricanes. Another is that less moisture arrives on the trade winds, intensifying the forest drought.

Marina Silva, a fiery former rubber-tapper who is now Brazil's Environment Minister, described how the Government was finally cracking down on the felling by seizing illegally cut logs, closing illicit enterprises and fining and imprisoning offenders.

As a result, she says, it dropped by 31 per cent last year.

But that takes it only back to the levels it was in 2001, still double what it was 10 years before. And it has reached far into the forest after the American multinational Cargill built a huge port for soya three years ago at Santarem.

This encouraged entrepreneurs to cut down trees to grow soya. The symposium flew to inspect the damage this had caused—vast fields of beans destined to feed supermarket chickens in Europe, where until recently there was lush forest.

Brazilian politicians say their country has so many other pressing problems that the destruction is unlikely to be brought under control, unless the world helps.

Calculations by Hylton Philipson, a British merchant banker and rainforest campaigner, reckon that doing this would take US$60 billion ($80 billion) a year—less than a third of the cost of the Iraq war.

About a fifth of the Amazonian rainforest has been razed completely. Another 22 per cent has been harmed by logging, allowing the sun to penetrate to the forest floor, drying it out. Add these two figures together and the total is perilously close to 50 per cent, predicted as the "tipping point" that marks the death of the Amazon. Nobody knows when that crucial threshold will be passed, but growing numbers of scientists believe that it is coming ever closer.

One of Nobre's colleagues, Dr Philip Fearnside, says: "With every tree that falls, we increase the probability that the tipping point will arrive."

NOT ALL ISRAELIS SUPPORT LEBANON INVASION

From www.anarchistnews.org by Avi Cohen. Roee Nahmias contributed to the report.

Two activists were arrested Saturday evening during a demonstration held in Tel Aviv in protest of the Israel Defense Forces operation in Lebanon. The weekly demonstration of left-wing activists began at King George Street, near Dizengoff Center, and continued in a march on the road toward Nahalat Binyamin, with the protestors blocking the road for traffic.

In spite of the arrangement reached with the police, according to which only 1,500 protestors would take part in the march, twice the number of protestors arrived at the place, and it was anyway okayed by the police.

Police officers vs. demonstrators

After a one-hour march, the protestors arrived at Allenby Street. They evacuated the road, continued toward the Nahalat Binyamin pedestrian mall, and traffic continued to flow. At a certain stage, the police said, dozens of anarchist activists, along with several left-wing protestors, began walking on the road again and blocking traffic.

According to the police, officers attempted to prevent the disruption to the traffic, and in response the protestors began going wild, throwing objects, sticks, eggs and bags containing excrement at the police. The police arrested two protestors, and the demonstration continued quietly in Nahalat Binyamin.

Yonatan Pollak, an activists of the Anarchists Against The Fence movement, who took part in the demonstration, claimed that no bags containing excrement were thrown at the police and that the organization's activists did not go wild.

"There was no unruliness, apart from the unruliness on the part of the police, who were eager to fight with the demonstrators," he said.

Former Knesset Member Yael Dayan, who spoke at the demonstration, was applauded when she said that "the soldiers must be returned from Lebanon immediately." However, the crowd booed when she claimed that "the war was justified at its onset."

Hadash MK: War will not end in a military victory

Among the speakers at the demonstration was also Zohar Milgrom, an reserve soldier who was called by the army and told the crowd that he plans to announce his refusal to serve in Lebanon: "Under no circumstances am I ready to be a partner in the war crimes that the country is committing. The demonstration gives me and my friends a feeling that they still have something to belong to in this country."

Dr. Gadi Algazi of Tel Aviv University said that "this war is being committed on the back of the most poor, both in Israel and in Lebanon. Those who cannot escape are paying the heaviest price in this war."

Another speaker was Shaul Feldman, whose house in Haifa was destroyed after being hit by a rocket last week. Feldman told the crowd that on the first day of the war he took part in a demonstration against it, and the fact that a rocket fell on his house did not cause him to change his mind.

"I don't think this is a war that should be supported," he said.

Knesset Member Dov Khenin (Hadash) congratulated the demonstration participants, saying that "a demonstration attended by thousands expressed the broadening of the front against the war."

"Citizens who supported the war understand today that the war will not end in a military victory. Therefore, we must immediately cease the fire and begin negotiations to release prisoners on both sides," Khenin said.

The weekly left-wing demonstrations began about a month and a half ago, when Corporal Gilad Shalit was kidnapped and the IDF began striking in Gaza. At first they took place opposite the home of IDF Chief of Staff Dan Halutz. This is the first time the police were forced to intervene and exert power.

LEBANON CEASEFIRE: WILL ISRAEL PULL OUT?

By Gideon Alon and Yoav Stern, from *Haaretz* and The Associated Press

Israel Defense Forces Chief of Staff Dan Halutz said Wednesday that the IDF would halt its withdrawal from southern Lebanon if the Lebanese army did not deploy in the area within days.

"The withdrawal of the IDF within ten days is dependent upon the deployment of the Lebanese army," Halutz told the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Commitee, according to a spokesman.

"If the Lebanese army does not move down within a number of days to the south... the way I see it, we must stop our withdrawal," Halutz added. A senior General Staff officer said Wednesday morning that the IDF may be forced to stay in south Lebanon for months until the deployment of an international force.

"The deployment of UNIFIL troops in south Lebanon is likely to take several months. It is not clear exactly how many. Until then, IDF forces will be forced to stay in the field," the senior General Staff officer told the same committee.

The IDF withdrew some of its units from south Lebanon, and a senior UN official said it is technically possible to complete the Israeli withdrawal and Lebanese deployment quickly

UNIFIL chief: Allow us "strong measures" to enforce truce

The head of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) called for the United Nations to enable his force to take "strong measures" in order to enforce UN resolution 1701, which brought about the recent cease-fire between Israel and Hezbollah after more than a month of fighting.

Speaking to Haaretz, Major General Alain Pellegrini urged the Lebanese authorities to take responsibility for the disarmament of Hezbollah in the area close to the Lebanon-Israel border, saying that the responsibility for such a move lies primarily with them. When asked his soldiers would engage an armed Hezbollah activist, Pellegrini said that it was hard for him to answer.

It was possible, he said, but it would depend on the rules of engagement. He said that he would prefer that the UNIFIL troops had the ability to employ "strong measures" to enforce the UN resolution.

Pellegrini said he expects an advance force, most likely from France, to arrive in the region next week, in order to bolster the current deployment. Within several months, he said, another 15,000 troops would be deployed from a number of countries.

Since its inception in 1978, UNIFIL has been classed as an emergency temporary force. Israel has strongly criticized the force, whose presence has never deterred Hezbollah or Palestinian militant activity in south Lebanon against Israel.

CHINESE PUNX FIND WAYS TO PROTEST

from an article in *The Washington Post* by Maureen Fan

Shortly after midnight, in a smoky bar in a western Beijing neighborhood, a lanky 33-year-old in blue jeans and thick, black-rimmed glasses took the stage, looking every bit like an engineering student.

But as the guitarists on either side of Yang Haisong began thrashing out minor chords, he left little doubt about his credentials. He contorted his face, uttered an anguished cry and jerked his head to the frenetic rhythm that is universally recognizable to fans of punk rock.

"At the moment when blood flows out," Yang sang, "make a V sign, and scream loud!"

For Chinese punks today, it might take screaming to be heard. They make up a small slice of the music industry here, and they play to a largely underground scene. But their struggle to gain attention provides a glimpse of what it's like to be a rebel in a country that suppresses dissent and individuality, and an artist in a culture that worships money and Western fads.

"Most bands are into punk because it's fashionable. They are more like copy bands, cover bands that copy the lifestyle. Punk rock should be more dangerous, more deep. You should establish your own style," said Yang, the lead singer of P.K. 14, which has a sizable following and performed Saturday night at a bar in Beijing's Wudaokou district.

"We want to be a dangerous band, like Fugazi or The Clash or Bob Dylan. Woody Guthrie's folk music influenced me a lot," Yang said. "But because the government doesn't care about us, we are not forbidden from playing. Maybe we are not dangerous. It's sad."

Punks here believe they can say whatever they want. They are pierced and sullen, with spider-web tattoos on their elbows and cheap dye in their hair. Band slogans include "No future" and "Revolution for your life." Their lyrics urge fans to "never forget the lessons from Orwell" and to fight the police "until dead."

But in China, bands can't publicly turn the national anthem into a rock statement, as Jimi Hendrix did at Woodstock. Artists can't publish anti-government songs in Chinese. Just last month, the Culture Ministry announced a plan to help prevent the spread in karaoke bars of "unhealthy or obscene" music, or songs that have inappropriate sexual or political content.

As a result of these limitations, would-be anarchists in China have to be flexible. Chinese punks may admire Johnny Rotten and Sid Vicious of the Sex Pistols, but their methods are different.

One popular band sings sarcastically about its destructive need for Zhongnanhai cigarettes, a brand that happens to share its name with the residential compound for China's top leaders. Another band sings about "the square of hopelessness," without ever mentioning Tiananmen.

Still, some punk rockers say they don't shy away from making a statement.

"You can confront the government," insisted Lei Jun, 31, lead singer for Misando, a band named after a sweet traditional Chinese dessert.

Lei said he started listening to bootleg tapes of punk music in 1996. He and his friends attended their first live show a year later, more than two decades after punks began shocking audiences in New York and London.

"First, we liked the music. We felt excited," said Misando's drummer, Guo Yang, 20. "The characters. The personality. Sid Vicious. The power of 'Anarchy in the UK' and 'God Save the Queen.' We liked the energy and the fact that they could say what they were saying onstage."

Today, Lei wears combat boots, black T-shirts and white suspenders, and he shaves his head. It's a look, he said, meant to connect with the working class. He speaks of a "stress between the people and the government."

"Of course the government tells you what to do. It tells Americans what to do," he said. "The politics everywhere are ugly. It looks different here, but the nature of it is the same."

VACATIONS IN SPACE?!

From an article in *The New York Times*, By John Schwartz

The company that sent the first tourists to space is about to start offering its clients an alluring add-on: a spacewalk.

Space Adventures Ltd., a company based in Vienna, Va., that has sent three very wealthy men to orbit the earth on the International Space Station, is planning to announce today that future customers will be able to take an hour-and-a-half trip outside the station as well.

The price? Just $15 million, on top of the $20 million for the flight itself. For people who can afford $20 million for a 10-day vacation, the extra $15 million might seem like little more than overtipping.

The spacewalks have been approved by the Federal Space Agency of the Russian Federation, which provides training and transportation to the station on Soyuz rockets, said Eric Anderson, the chief executive of Space Adventures.

Using the initials for extravehicular activity, the technical term for a spacewalk, Alekséi Krasnov, director of the Russian space agency, said in a statement that space tourists "could potentially perform an EVA" with a month's training, and if they had the proper "physical and psychological capabilities." The Russians have been eager to commercialize space and get most of the fees that Space Adventures collects.

A NASA spokeswoman, Melissa Mathews, said the agency had not been informed by Russia about any intention to sell EVA's.

Fewer than 450 people have traveled to space, and the club of spacewalkers is even more exclusive. Just 151 people have stepped outside the relative safety of their craft to greet the void with only a visor to separate life and death.

"Spacewalk is the ultimate experience that we've managed to invent as humans," said Tom Jones, a former astronaut and spacewalker who is an adviser to Space Adventures.

Being outside the craft when "there's nothing between you and the ground below but empty space," he said, is "incomparable."

As for the nausea and vomiting that some astronauts experience, and which could preclude a spacewalk, Mr. Jones said "almost everybody feels good after two or three days."

Warming to the idea of another shot at that view, he said, "I think if I had 15 million, I'd go for it."

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PHILADELPHIA'S "POINTLESS" FEST SHUTDOWN

Pointless Fest Cancellation/Refund/Office Statement: R5 Productions

It seems that Pointless Fest getting shut down was inevitable. This fest has consistently been the most rewarding but also simultaneously stressful event R5 Productions hosts every year. It is unfortunate that the actions of a group of people who weren't even attending the shows caused the ruining of an entire event for hundreds of people. We would like to try and avoid stereotyping people by giving them labels. We have been guilty in the past of referring to the bad apples by labels that refer to an entire counter culture, and we will do our best to try and avoid that here.

This year we had an inordinate amount of "train hopper" type kids in town. Being that they do not have homes or hotels to stay at they often come early and stay and hangout in the general area of the venue. This year was no exception. Before the show started on Thursday we had the police come by and say they already had a handful of complaints. Dealing with all of the out-of-town kids and bands attending the fest causes a lot of stress, let alone thirty of forty people camped out with all their personal effects and dogs. If you bring a dog, you are obviously not attending the show. A wrist band is required for entry, so it is obvious who is here to see the bands and who is here just to hang out on the sidewalk.

One of the Department of Licenses and Inspections and many representatives of the police had been in contact with us before and during the festival (staring on Thursday) about these groups of individuals who were loitering and bothering neighboring residents. We tried many types of negotiation and diplomacy to get these kids to "move along" during Thursday evening but nothing seemed to work. We were finally told that the fest was close to being considered/labeled a nuisance and would be shutdown unless we hired police officers (which we tried but it was too short notice) or our own private security, to make sure these kids were not harassing or disrupting everyday normal life in the neighborhood.

Left with little choice we complied (honestly after more than a decade of doing shows we have little faith in the scene policing itself so it wasn't exactly a hard decision). The decision was made to hire the usual R5 security for Friday evening but unlike most shows, these extra security individuals would be primarily deployed throughout the neighborhood (vs. the actual property of the church). We believed that this extra precautionary plan would ensure sure that kids would not loiter at the show as well as (more importantly) the surrounding alleyways and intersections. From what we witnessed early on, it worked *very* well. The small group of non-paying individuals had left, there were no complaints received by the police and everyone was having a good time.

(The following event time line is what we have gathered from various sources we trust—this is in no way supposed to be official testimony or a report as to what happened—this as close as we can get without launching our own investigation.)

Approximately at 10:00pm some of these individuals had returned, some quite inebriated. After being told to leave ("if you do not have a wristband, you need to leave this area") they began to verbally joust the security. Fortunately they (security) showed remarkable patience in dealing with these kids for the next 30 minutes. They were called every name in the book—everything from nazis to fascists to narcs. One was even spit upon. In the four years of Pointless Fest, every security has *quit* because of frustration of dealing with these kids.

On Friday (and Thursday) not a single hand was laid on any individual. Around 10:15/10:20 a police car pulled up to check on us/the fest. We reported everything was calm and the fest would be over in less than 40 minutes. The officer replied back with something along the lines of "cool." At this time a small group of traveler kids approached a group of security people in a rear parking lot near 21st and Market (about a block away from the church). The kids were verbally confronting security (about what we do not know for sure—only hearsay at this point) and two officers came to the scene to intervene.

During the conversation one of these kids allegedly put his hand in his pocket. The officer asked him to remove his hand from his pocket and keep his hands in plain view. The individual declined the request and left his hand remaining in his pocket. Another request was made which ignored again. One of the officers then allegedly grabbed this persons arm. The individual was told to lay on the ground or on a car, he did not comply and force was used to bring him down. At this point other members of the small group began to yell at the officers (which is understandably reasonable from the kids end). A few moments later an unidentified traveler person allegedly attempted (or did) attack on one of the two officers, the officer then brought this individual to the ground, which then led to a unidentified woman running towards the officers placing her hands/arms around his shoulders/neck/head (essentially putting him in some sort of head-lock). This woman was then struck with a baton—then an individual holding a dog "sicked" his dog on one of the two officers, while being bit in the leg, the officer struck the animal, which further enraged the small group of travelers.

One of the travelers left the scene of the incident to gather more kids from the show to come to the scene (not necessarily to fight but to witness the event). New show attendees arrived at the scene—witnessing only the "aftermath" and not what led up to these incidents. These show attendees, not knowing what was going on, began to approach the officers, who were understandably "on nerve." As the individuals drew closer the officers began to yell at the kids to back up and not "corner" them. Some listened, some did not. The officers than pushed and shoved these kids (who did not listen) back. Outnumbered they either called for assistance (which is very serious) or for backup.

When new officers arrived not knowing who was who or what group of kids started this (I am guessing most officers are not trained to distinguish between crust punks and traveler kids) they began to clear kids off the parking lot property—some officers used force (batons drawn, pushing) some did not. They began to clear Van Pelt street instructing people to go back inside, which proved to be difficult as word traveled inside of the show and most of the bands and kids inside were coming outside to check out the situation. At this point more officers arrived an recommended to us that we "send everyone home." We agreed and we began to yell for kids to leave.

It didn't seem like many people were listening (as everyone was enamored by the spectacle) and the officers were growing frustrated by the non-action of the festival attendees. Soon officers began to push kids up the street to evacuate the area (at this point we estimate that 50+ cops were on the scene). As the mass of people were leaving (and mostly not leaving) kids further up Chestnut began to throw rocks, bottles, and even a trash can at officers. This obviously led to the majority of the officers to rush up Chestnut the street to stop/arrest those who were partaking in the violence. At this point anyone that looked remotely punk was then told to get off Chestnut Street immediately. We witnessed some police officers being "tough" (as in not allowing kids to meet up with their friends, cross the street, pushing them around etc). We were even pushed around while trying to make sure everyone was safe. To us it appeared on a whole the reaction was somewhat understandable (we obviously couldn't be at 56 places at once so who knows?). The street quickly cleared and it returned to "normal" just a few short minutes later.

We met up after the police left and decided to cancel the fest for three reasons. One: most importantly we did not want put any more kids, police or ourselves in danger. The last thing we needed was to facilitate a repeat incident. Two: we did not want to continue to subject the surrounding neighbors and businesses to another "bad evening". Three: Continuing the fest (attracting more traveler kids back to the scene of the events) would be putting our primary venue in jeopardy of being shut down for good.

In review, we obviously "bummed" that these events transpired. We will likely loose thousands of dollars in costs paying for these bands to fly in from all over the world. Despite what others may think, we are not pleased nor happy that anyone was injured. Due to Friday's events, we will no longer host Pointless Fest in downtown Philadelphia. Whether we even host it ever again remains to be scene. The First Unitarian Church will continue to host R5 events (so no, it has not been shut down).

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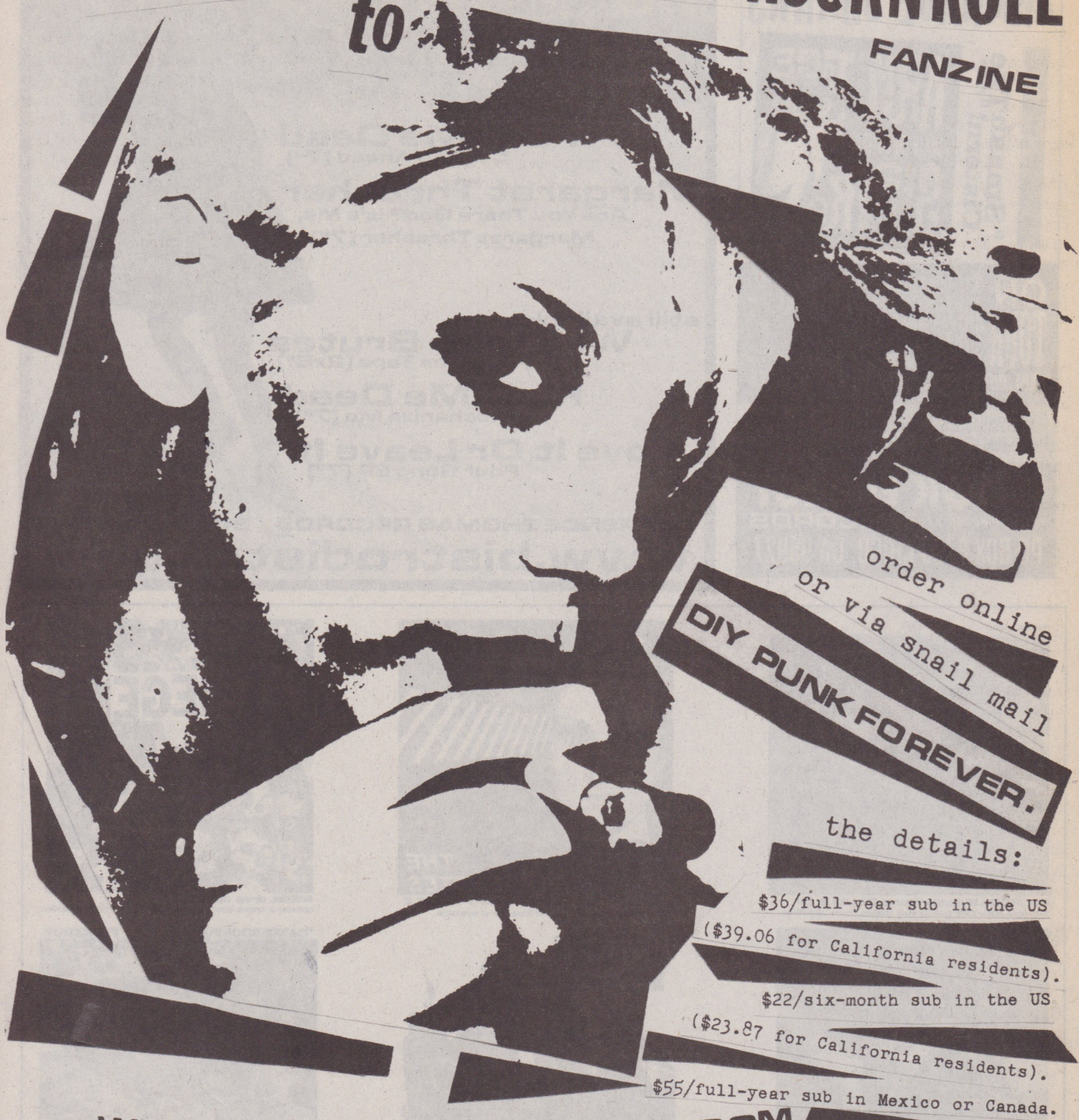

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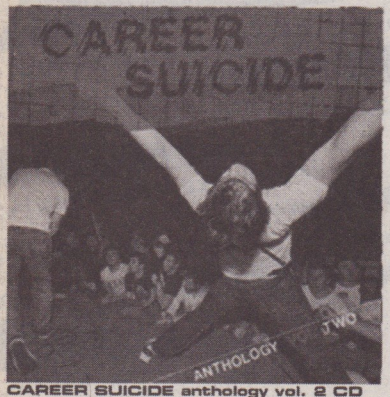

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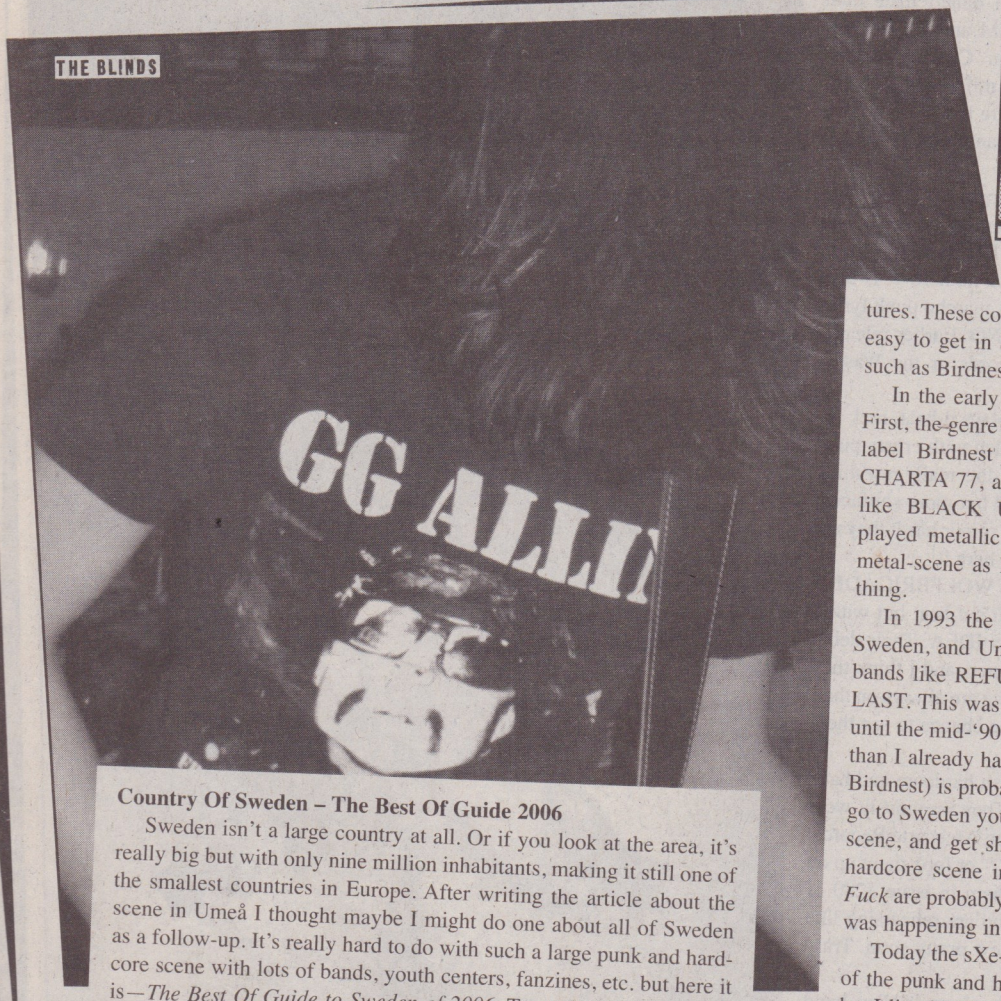
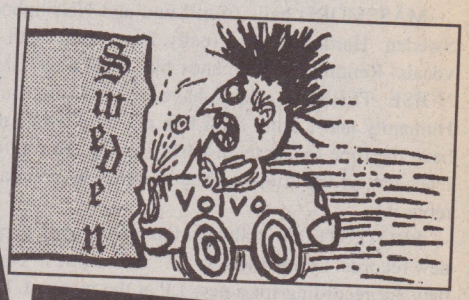




Country Of Sweden – The Best Of Guide 2006

Sweden isn't a large country at all. Or if you look at the area, it's really big but with only nine million inhabitants, making it still one of the smallest countries in Europe. After writing the article about the scene in Umeå I thought maybe I might do one about all of Sweden as a follow-up. It's really hard to do with such a large punk and hardcore scene with lots of bands, youth centers, fanzines, etc. but here it is—*The Best Of Guide to Sweden of 2006*. Try to keep in mind that this is one punk's thoughts about everything. I can't mention everything but I try to do as best as I can. Alright?

As I said, Sweden is a country with only 9,000,000 inhabitants. It's located in Scandinavia in the north of Europe between Finland and Norway. From the south to the north border it's around 2000 km and much of the north is still basically uninhabited.

The Swedish punk scene began around 1978 mostly in southern-Sweden with bands like EBBA GRÖN, RASTA HUNDEN, KSMB, and others following what was going on in the UK and US at the time. These years are well documented in the book *Svensk Punk* ("*Swedish Punk*") though it's focus is the big cities like Stockholm, Malmö, and Gothenburg. The music is best documented for the big cities on the compilation *Ny Våg—Svensk Punk 78-82*, and if you want music from smaller cities check out the three *Vägra Raggarna Benzin* compilations.

In the early '80s Sweden's punk scene was really big. The first raw punk bands, who also were inspired by the UK movement, were ANTI-CIMEX, DISARM, MODERAT LIKVIDATION, and others, and at the same time there was still a lot of punk rock/new wave stuff going on. The '80s punk scene is also well documented on another three compilations, *Varning För Punk 1-3*, which feature almost every single band that did something noteworthy, and includes lots of pictures. These comps were released by Distortion and are still pretty easy to get in Sweden if you check bigger mailorder companies such as Birdnest, Distortion, or Äggtapes.

In the early '90s there was a lot of different stuff happening. First, the genre Trallpunk was growing with ASTA KASK and the label Birdnest releasing bands like RADIOAKTIVA RÄKER, CHARTA 77, and DIA PSALMA. At the same time crust bands like BLACK UNIFORMS, WOLFPACK and SKITSYSTEM played metallic crust influenced by what was going on in the metal-scene as Distortion was the popular label for this type of thing.

In 1993 the straight edge movement grew larger throughout Sweden, and Umeå was the capitol of the metallic sXe-hardcore bands like REFUSED, FINAL EXIT, ABHINANDA, and OUTLAST. This was a popular trend in Sweden for a couple of years until the mid-'90s, but I don't want to discuss this movement more than I already have. Desperate Fight Records (distributed through Birdnest) is probably the best way to learn more about this. If you go to Sweden you can talk to almost anyone involved in the punk scene, and get shitloads of material and info about the '90s-sXe hardcore scene in Sweden. The comps called *Straight Edge As Fuck* are probably best for those of you who are interested by what was happening in Umeå at the time.

Today the sXe-hardcore scene is pretty segregated from the rest of the punk and hardcore scenes, and is not as large as it used to be. I live in Umeå where the majority of the hardcore scene was sXe-kids, and today I think there are around ten of them in this town who are really into that stuff—possibly less.

Okay, that was the short, requisite history lesson that left out a lot, but you now you've gotten the general gist. Sweden's punk scene has always been really big for the size of the country, and it still is. So now I'll bring you up to date. As I did a scene report recently for Umeå and it's bands, they will not be mentioned. Check it out for more info on Swedish hardcore. *(Editor: see issue #279)*

Bands of 2006

SKITKIDS is one of the bands many of you know of. Members of SCUMBRIGADE and KONTROVERS playing d-beat like TOTALITÄR, but with a rock 'n' roll edge, guitar solos and shit. They are amazing on both record and live. They have some stuff out but I would recommend the LP called *Onna For Pleasure* for you who don't already know this band. SKITKIDS played an amazing show at K-town this year, and rumor has it they are writing songs for a new twelve inch as we speak. Let's see what happens with that. I can't wait to here more from them. Contact SKITKIDS through Kick N Punch or Instigate Records for more information, records, merch etc.

FYFAN! is and upcoming d-beat attack from Malmö, town in

the south. I only know there are members from OKTOBR and REIGN OF BOMBS in this band, and they played at the K-town Festival as well. Sounds like '80s Swedish d-beat, and they have only a demo out at the time. You can track them down through Myspace to listen to the songs, and hopefully we get a 7" or something pretty soon from these guys.

MÄSSMÖRD hails from Lund and Helsingborg in the south of Sweden. Hardhittin' and really fast d-beat with male/female dual vocals. Reminds me of bands like SKITSYSTEM and EXTREME NOISE TERROR. They have an CD out on Crimes Against Humanity and I think the LP is out on Alerta Antifascista. I didn't have the time to ask them what's up for the future but there was an interview in the August issue of *MRR* so you can check it out for more info.

PROTESTERA is always busy with stuff happening, tours, and new records. I think there is a 7" and a split 7" coming out soon, and they are recording for a new LP at the moment. For those who have not heard them, they are Sweden's anarcho punx, numero 1. D-beat as hell with dual vocals by male and female with anarcho punk lyrics sounding a lot like OPERATION and APATIA NO. Earlier releases can easily be found through Halvfabrikat Records or the Wasted Sounds Mailorder.

MOTÖRBREATH is from Gothenburg and plays d-beat, rock 'n' roll, and yeah, it's maybe the new trend in Sweden with crusty punx but it's really amazing so who cares. These guys do a really raw thing like UNCURBED and MOTÖRHEAD on speed but more shitfaced. They have a great LP out on Wasted Sounds and rumor has it they are about to follow it up pretty soon. I can't wait to here it!

TODAY'S OVERDOSE is what came out of WOLFBRIGADE. I think many of you already heard about them. It's d-beat but with a good rockin' feel making it sound like POISON IDEA. Their debut 7" is out on Wasted Sounds and Profane Existence, and I think they will follow it up pretty soon. Tours and everything are always on their minds so don't worry. You will probably get the chance to see them whereever you live.

SVARTENBRANDT plays fast as fuck thrash hardcore and hails from Linköping, 20 km south of Stockholm. They previously were called CARDIAC ARREST and have a 7" out on Archcarte Records. Sounds American if you ask me. Check out the 7" or look them up on Myspace. There was also an interview with them in issue #280 of *MRR*. They did a Euro tour in May, I think, and are rehearsing like every day so I think we will hear something new pretty soon. Truly amazing! Check it out!

HEADED FOR DISASTER is "Zombie hardcore." New band from Stockholm with no ex-members. These kids are around 18 years old and crank out an amazing mix of d-beat, '80s hardcore, and punk rock with amazing lyrics. I met them a couple of days ago in Stockholm and overheard they will try to record a 12". They have two demos and are probably looking for a label to release the new stuff. Incredible live and one of the top Swedish bands I think we'll hear about for the next few years.

THE BLINDS were not going to be mentioned because I'm not really sure how active they are right now. These kids are between 15 and 18 years old and they do an amazing hardcore punk version of THE HIVES. Last year they released a demo that later was released in the states, and they have an LP that will be out anytime now on Wasted Sounds. Last year everyone was talking about them and they played all the Swedish festivals, but as I said I'm not sure what's going on right now. Still one of the best things from Sweden during the past few years, and you just have to check it out. If you don't, you're an idiot.

ARCATERA hails from Stockholm and plays melodic crust in the veins of TRAGEDY, EKKAIA, and reminds me a lot of ENVY. These guys did a split 7" with REIGN OF BOMBS and a split CD with YOUR KINGDOM IS DOOMED from Turkey. They have just recorded new songs for a 7", which sounds great. This will hopeful-

SKITKIDS

ly be out for their month-long European tour in September and October, making there way through almost every country in Europe. Check out the tour schedule at www.myspace.com/arcatera, and you'll find the dates and some songs from upcoming releases are up there as well.

SISTA SEKUNDEN is the last entry for this part of the band section and are my absolute favorite band around today in Sweden. From Malmö, SISTA SEKUNDEN plays melodic, fast hardcore punk with lots of sing-a-long parts, catchy lyrics, and some skate-influences. Absolutely amazing on both record and live. Members from INTENSITY, SATANIC SURFERS, ETT LIV KVAR, and SKITKIDS. They have a CD out on Instigate Records. Get it while you can, fucking amazing, incredible! Can't wait to here more from these guys!

Other bands around who are amazing but I didn't get time or space to talk about:
REIGN OF BOMBS, UNDERGÅNG, CAN SUCK IT!, VICTIMS, SKITSYSTEM, TO WHAT END?, BRUCE BANNER, KAMIKATZE, BABOON SHOW, DISCO VOLANTE, GUTANAMO BAY, DISLICKERS, 1,2 FUCK YOU, DÖDSDÖMD, HUMAN WASTE, AMÖBA, AVSKUM, RÖVSVETT, KRIGSHOT and many, *many* more bands active today doing shows, releasing awesome records, and making the Swedish punk scene a beautiful place. Check them all out. Though I didn't have the time to talk about them all these are amazing bands that deserve as much attention as the ones who received descriptions.

Reunion Years, Reunion Bands

As all over the world a lot of classic Swedish bands have done reunion gigs during the last couple of years. To celebrate the 25th anniversary of Swedish Punk there was a festival with many reunions. In 1999 RASTA HUNDEN did a reunion gig, and there are still more of the old bands playing again. Some are really bad and should have stayed in there grave, but still there is something really fun about seeing bands you grew up listening to play again. There are two bands I will mention in this section that play at the moment and deserve at least some attention.

ASTA KASK is, if you ask me, one of the best ever Swedish punk bands. Their music inspired me a lot growing up as a punk in Sweden, and I think it was 2003 or 2004 they reformed for a reunion tour. I saw them at Hamnmagasinet in Umeå were I live and it was amazing. After a while the drummer dropped out and was replaced with Dadde (WOLFBRIGADE and TO WHAT END?). Now they have done a shitload of gigs and when I saw them at Sweden's biggest punk festival Augustibuller 2004 I cried for the first time at a concert. I was that happy. ASTA are now back with a new CD/LP on the Swedish commercial label Burning Heart Records, and it's out right now. I can't wait to get it, but I'm still quite afraid about it. A 7" was released as well on Wasted Sounds, and as I hear a lot of their old 7"s are soon to be re-released.

MOB 47 has been seen by all the punx in Sweden except me during the past few weeks. I don't care to much for reunions, and feel that the time will come when I see them soon enough, but hey, it's fucking MOB 47. A band who changed hardcore music with their superfast d-beat hardcore. They did three reunion shows in Stockholm during Maym and will play at Sweden's biggest punk festival about a week after I write this. They have recorded a new song called "Back to Attack" and it sounds amazing. I beg for a new LP and many, *many* reunion tours all over the world!

Labels, Recordstores and Distribution

Wasted Sounds and the Cagematch Federation is Sweden's largest DIY label, and will soon have released 50 records from bands like JED WHITEY, TODAY'S OVERDOSE, KNUGEN FALLER, TRISTESS, ICOS, AUKTION, VICIOUS, SMALLTOWN, RANDY, INSURGENT KID, MOTÖRBREATH, and REGULATIONS. Wasted Sounds is handling distribution for many labels, both national and international, and Kaj who is in charge is releasing records with his own label Cagematch Federation. Besides doing an unbelievable amount of work for just one person he has booked a lot of tours for bands in Scandinavia. Many great new releases are to come from the WSHQ now located in Linköping after beeing located in Umeå for some years. This is the place to go as well to find stuff from Ny Våg, Busted heads, Desperate Fight Records, Bridge, Limdimma, and many more great Swedish labels who either exist now or are long gone. If you are not familiar with WS already, check it out today and make a big order. We want this label and distribution to be around for many years and if that will happen they need to sell records in the distro as well. Check out www.wastedsounds.com today!

Instigate Records is Andy, from SATANIC SURFERS, SISTA SEKUNDEN and INTENSITY, does this label with a well sorted distro, located in Malmö. He has released stuff from bands like SKITKIDS, SISTA SEKUNDEN, GORILLA ANGREB, SUNDAY MORNING EINSTEINS, and MARTYRDÖD. Out now is the Euro press of the new SKITKIDS 7" done with Danish label Kick N Punch. Check it out—awesome guy, great label! www.instigaterecords.com

Communichaos Media is a Stockholm based label that has been around for some years now. They have some great records released by bands like IMPERIAL LEATHER, KRIGSHOT, ABDUCTEE SD, and SIGNAL LOST, and also a great distro worthy of checking out. They just released the new KRIGSHOT album together with Profane Existence. Check them out at www.communichaos.com

Sound Pollution is a great record store in Stockholm to visit for its tons of goodies. Here you can find those still in press but hard to find Swedish records from labels like Distortion as well as fanzines, records from smaller labels, and lot's of metal. Sound Pollution is located in the part of Stockholm called Gamla Stan and you can check them out on the web at www.soundpollution.se

Birdnest Records and Mailorder has been around for a long time now and have done distribution for Desperate Fight Records. They have released many classic Swedish punk bands like RADIOAKTIVA RÄKER, CHARTA 77, and DIA PSALMA. They have a great mailorder, very expensive shit, but a great choice of records, t-shirts, fanzines, etc., and a lot of hard-to-find stuff. So if you are looking for Swedish comps, Distortion releases, and the like, check out Birdnest at www.birdnest.se

Fanzines and Webzines

Attack Fanzine is, if you ask me one of the best webzines around in Sweden today. *Attack* started around 1997 and has been on the web for quite a while now. Here you can find reviews, interviews, profiles of people who do artwork for punk records, photos and articles. The photo archive is really great as well as the rest of the website. Nice artwork and everything. Well worth some time to check it out! www.attackfanzine.net

Rise And Subvert is Sonny from MÄSSMÖRD'S webzine and I hope there will be a paper version soon as well. Quite new on the web but really nice with everything you need. Focused mostly on crust/anarcho/d-beat with articles and interviews with bands as well as he discusses of a lot of political issues. Up now is also a tour report from AUKTION's European tour in June. Check it out now at www.riseandsubvert.net

HDHC Fanzine is the best paper zine around today if you ask me. It's written in Swedish though so kind of hard to understand for you foreigners. HDHC has four issues out. Loads of humor, great tour reports, articles, interviews, and everything else you need in a good paper zine. This is made by Andy from Instigate Records so for more info check out www.instigaterecords.com

Gigs, Youth centers and stuff like that

It is possible to do a full Scandinavia tour today if you talk to the right people with almost two weeks packed with shows in Scandinavia. Though there are long distances, it could be really fun to travel around. Here is the cities that you should focus on if you travel or tour in Sweden, and the gig spots from South to North:
Malmö—After many years of problems in Sweden's third largest city, Malmö finnaly managed to get a great place for gigs. This is the home-town of bands like INTENSITY, SKITKIDS, and KONTROVERS. In early 2006 they started up Aktivitetshuset in an industrial area outside the part of Malmö called Möllan. I was here for the Motown (pre-K-town fest) two months ago for my first visit, and I had a great time. It

seems like Malmö is a really nice place now with the punk scene and it's well worth trying to play here. To contact Aktivitetshuset and the organizers, check out www.malmo.hardcorepunk.se

Göteborg—"Gothenburg" in English, is located on the west coast, 300 km north of Malmö, and the home of bands like MARTYRDÖD, ACURSED, and PROTESTERA. After some years of problems with gig spots, the local anarcho-punk organization, SPATT, got a place in the part of the city called Gamlestan. The place is called Underjorden and I played there on our last tour. Right now the scene here is awesome and it seems like it's really going in the right direction. Contact SPATT if you wanna play here or visit Göteborg at www.spatt.info

Linköping—A city located 300 km north of Göteborg and 200 from Stockholm, Linköping has around 150,000 inhabitants and is now the fourth largest city in Sweden. Home to bands like OUTLAST, REIGN OF BOMBS, and SVARTENBRANDT, they have a group organizing shows called Oljud at the local youth center Skylten, which is one of my favorite places in Sweden at the moment. This is also the home of the Wasted Sounds distro which has it's office located at this youth center. Contact oljud at www.oljud.com

Stockholm—For some years there were almost no DIY punk gigs in Stockholm, which is the capitol and largest city in Sweden. All the shows were in Uppsala about 50 km north of Stockholm, but things have changed since last year. Stockholm has a lot of clubs as well as a great punk house called Fullersta at the moment, and the guys from Headed For Disaster just started a club at a place called Gula Villan as well, so there is a lot going on in Stockholm in different places. If you play anarcho/crust/d-beat you should try out Fullersta, email is snutstryk@yahoo.com. Otherwise you can contact Communichaos. They have some clubs and contacts, or you can contact the guys in Headed For Disaster at klubb1984@spray.se for Gula Villan.

Umeå—This is where I'm sitting and writing this shit right now. My hometown and to brag one of the most organized punk scenes in Europe at the moment. Umeå is located far in the north and it's a bit of a trip to get here, 700 km north of Stockholm, an eight-hour drive. But almost everybody who plays here seems to think it was worth it. Lot's of people at the shows, great local acts like REGULATIONS, AUKTION, DISCONVENIENCE, VICIOUS, KNUGEN FALLER, THE RATS, and INSURGENT KID. You can email me at potinhc@hotmail.com or go to www.umeahardcore.com if you wanna play here. At the moment we are trying to start an alternative/punk house/youth center in Umeå and need all the help and support we can get.

Luleå –You can't play more north in Sweden than Luleå, a town with 70,000 inhabitants, and about 300 km north of Umeå. If you play here the best thing is to go north to Finland and play though that country. However, Luleå is necessary to book on your Scandinavia trip or tour. The punk scene here is amazing at the moment and there is always A LOT of people and kids at the shows. Count on a great day with the northern culture and a big party if you go here. Contact Sven at Luleå Hardcore at norrkraft@hotmail.com

How to organize a tour in Sweden / Scandinavia?

I have to make this short but I'll give those of you who are interested in touring here a few hints how to do it. You can always start by emailing me at potinhc@hotmail.com or Kaj Wasted Sounds at info@wastedsounds.com, and one of us will try to help you out with organizing the tour, finding contacts, etc.

Other than the cities I mentioned there are many cities you can play but those previously mentioned should be concentrated on. Besides those, you can always try to get in touch with people in Halmstad, Helsingborg, Lund, Karlskrona and Kalmar for the south. Finnspång, Jönköping, Sandviken, and Uppsala for the middle parts and more info about how to go to Finland if you are in the north parts. You can get info for these towns through me if you email me. Here is an example for a longer tour and a shorter tour in Scandinavia with false dates but you get the point:

Full Scandinavia Tour:
1 sep – Kopenhagen (DK)
2 sep – Malmö / Lund (SWE)
3 sep – Göteborg (SWE)
4 sep – Linköping (SWE)
5 sep – Stockholm / Uppsala / Sandviken (SWE)
6 sep – Umeå (SWE)

7 sep – Luleå (SWE)
Ok, here comes a tricky part where you can either go to Finland or Norway. Let's start with trying Finand:
8 sep – Oulo (FIN)
9 sep – Rovaniemi (FIN)
10 sep – Tampere (FIN)
11 sep – Helsinki (FIN)
(take the ferry between Helsinki and Stockholm here…)
12 sep – Stockholm/Uppsala (SWE)
13 sep – Karlskrona/Kalmar/Jönköping
Ok, then let's make it a bit shorter but we try Norway instead:
8 sep – Östersund (SWE) or DAY OFF
9 sep – Trondheim (NOR)
10 sep – Oslo (NOR)
11 sep – Helsingborg / Göteborg (SWE)
And there you have it. If you don't have the time to do this many dates in Sweden I recommend you do only three or four shows in Sweden, and skip Finland and Norway, but try to start in Copenhagen:
1 sep – Copenhagen (DK)
2 sep – Malmö / Göteborg (SWE)
3 sep – Stockholm / Linköping (SWE)
4 sep – Malmö / Göteborg / Jönköping / Kalmar / Karlskrona (SWE)

OK...this is a quick sketch of touring Scandinavia if you do a DIY punk/hardcore tour. But if you would like to get some help, find more contacts, and similar stuff, just send me an email, and I'll try to help out. And well, I could talk much more about what's happening in Sweden at the moment, because there is a lot to talk about and so many things I would like to mention, but write me if you would like to know more and I can try to take some time to tell you everything. Also, we're an excellent source if you're planning to just travel. That's everything for now!

// Potin (A)(E)
potinhc@hotmail.com

BLACKPOOL, UK

In terms of constructing a Blackpool scene report I will approach it by looking at a variety of different facets of this veritable *diamond of a location* such as the bands, zines, web resources, gigs/collectives, local venues, outlets, labels, the local media, the local council, cool initiatives (art spaces) etc. Hopefully, this should give a bit of structure to what could otherwise easily become a rambling and incoherent diatribe.

In order to give things a sense of perspective I need to sort of ground this article by giving (to what is largely an *Amerikkkan*, largely non-UK readership) some background information on three things. Firstly, a bit of background on the town, homestead, principality or whatever you would choose to call this strange and unusual place known as Blackpool. Secondly, who I am and what has been my on-off, love-hate relationship with the location, its bands, its vibe, its inhabitants, and its records in the fields of suicides and violent death rates throughout my tempestuous 25 year punk rock existence. And thirdly, why I think this time (more than any other time—cue Ron Greenwood) during my short visit to this planet is arguably the best time ever (so far) to do a scene report on Blackpool.

Blackpool

OK for those who do not know the town Blackpool is one hell of a strange place. Hanging on to the North West coast of that place we call England in the union known as Britain, Blackpool is the UK's largest working class holiday destination/tourist resort. It came to be largely in the 19th century as the end of the train-line invasion destination for workers from the Lancashire mill towns to let off steam, drink heavily and probably fight and fuck just like the visitors of today. (Although the official history would suggest that these sweet cloth capped, capstan smoking yokels just wanted to paddle in the sea and take in the sea air, whilst eating oysters and talking about Queen Victoria).

Today Blackpool is home to major tourist attractions like the Pleasure Beach, Blackpool Tower, the Illuminations and is variously described as the "Las Vegas of the North," "Smackpool," or the "Cesspit of the universe." Like any town it is a place of *Blue Velvet*, yet possibly more than most. Beneath its smiley, welcoming tourism literature it boasts the highest murder rates, suicide rates, daily visitor rates, drug addiction and public disturbance rates in the UK.

For a town of 150,000 there is very little in the way of paid employment. All the medium/light industries (cars and engineering) packed up and went inland in the '70s, the last car maker TVR is on the ropes and likely to close soon, so aside from local government jobs (civil service) and cyclical tourism work there is little in terms of a job infrastructure to the place.

Other things you should know about the town is that it has the biggest gay scene in the UK (along with Brighton on the southwest coast), a once famous football team that has gone from riches to rags, a very dangerous and thriving organised criminal element (read what THE KRAYS had to say about it), a very heavy handed local police force (possibly explained by the serious disorder the town *enjoys* during the summer months) and for our purposes a fairly thriving underground PUNK scene.

Who the fuck am I ?

So that's the town—Me? Well, I was born and grew up in Blackpool although I went to University in Manchester and lived and worked there in the '80s and early '90s. Been running *Just Say No To Government Music* records since 1990, edited *Eat the Rich* fanzine in the early '80s and have been editing *Blackpool Rox II* fanzine since 2000. Have played in a bunch of bands (Index XI, The Puds, Erase Today, Litterbug, Higgins++ .... and from time to time SICK56 whenever required).

Always being a believer in DIY and mining for gold in your own backyard propelled me to build up a fine collection of local zines/tapes/rekkids/tapes/CDs and stuff. There is a veritable cornucopia of about 500 different items relating to the Blackpool music scene in my punk rock bunker/studio, and this ever increasing pile of stuff has finally been of some use in the sense that it prompted the creation of a fairly significant local initiative, *The Ugly Truth about Blackpool* CD, volumes one and two. These two CDs, which will be part of a wider UK series, document the history of Blackpool's underground from 1977 onwards. A lot of the information you'll find in this article has been unearthed, re-invigorated and put back into the public domain as a result of these ongoing CD projects, which in under a year have seen over 4,000 copies get distributed.

Why now is maybe the right time to be writing this scene report

Blackpool, like many towns/cities in the UK, is undergoing a bit of a renaissance in terms of new bands, gig activity and its supporting network of venues, media and scenesters. The reasons for this are obviously complex, however people have a real sense that something positive is happening and there are actually more bands functioning in and around the town since the late '70s. I have detailed all the Blackpool related cassette tapes, records, and CDs that I have managed to amass over the years and as well as being a useful guide to what's in and what isn't in, the volume of local output has had two distinct high points (1979-1982) and now (2003 to present), so maybe this is the ideal time to scribe a scene report.

Bands

In terms of key bands that have played a role in shaping the past, present and future let's start in 1977. The first local punk band to play and act up were Poulton school-boys THE PLASTIC LIZARDS which then became ZYKLON B, then SYNTAX then VEE VV. Active and in the spirit of the times they were fronted by local starlet Mark Ormrod and are being featured in Alex Ogg's new book *No More Heroes* on Cherry Red in October 2006. The band actually re-formed to play a one off gig at the Summer Daze 2 festival, a free open air all ages show we put on in the local park at the end of August.

If ZYKLON B were under the radar then the next band that gets mentioned were the exact opposite. Hesitating slightly to throw them into the mixer, but not to do so would be wrong, the most overground band of that era was SKREWDRIVER. Now most readers will be sussed realizing that we are distinguishing here between SKREWDRIVER, which was four Blackpool lads born out of a pub rock band called TUMBLING DICE, signed to Ted Carroll's innovative Chiswick label, gigged during 1977 with bands such as THE ROXY and DINGWALLS with the likes of Johnny Moped, THE MOVIES, SHAM 69, THE MODELS, THE CORTINAS, THE DAMNED and CHELSEA, released two singles (*You're So Dumb* and *Anti-social*)

ONE WAY SYSTEM

and one album (*All Skrewed Up*), and then broke up, from the neo-Nazi clowns that blighted the punk scene in the early '80s. That was more or less a different line up, so that was for all intents and purposes (and in everything but the name) a different band. If you need more persuasion check out original guitarists Phil Walmsley's interview on www.punk77.co.uk or the notes in *Blackpool Rox* issue eight, or the section on the jsntgm.com website.

SKREWDRIVER never actually gigged in Blackpool and was banned from playing by Blackpool Council (see the track *Too Much Confusion*) as the nation was awash with hysteria and moral indignation by this outbreak of punk rock. The importance of their existence was the fact that a band outside of the metropolis actually made a few ripples on what was very much a London based scene. As well as being one of the few Northern bands to be featured in Mark Perry/Danny Baker's *Sniffin' Glue* Fanzine they were one of the few northern *oiks* (be aware there is perceived to be a massive cultural and financial divide twixt Northerners and Southerners in the UK) to play gigs in London at the venues and with the bands mentioned above.

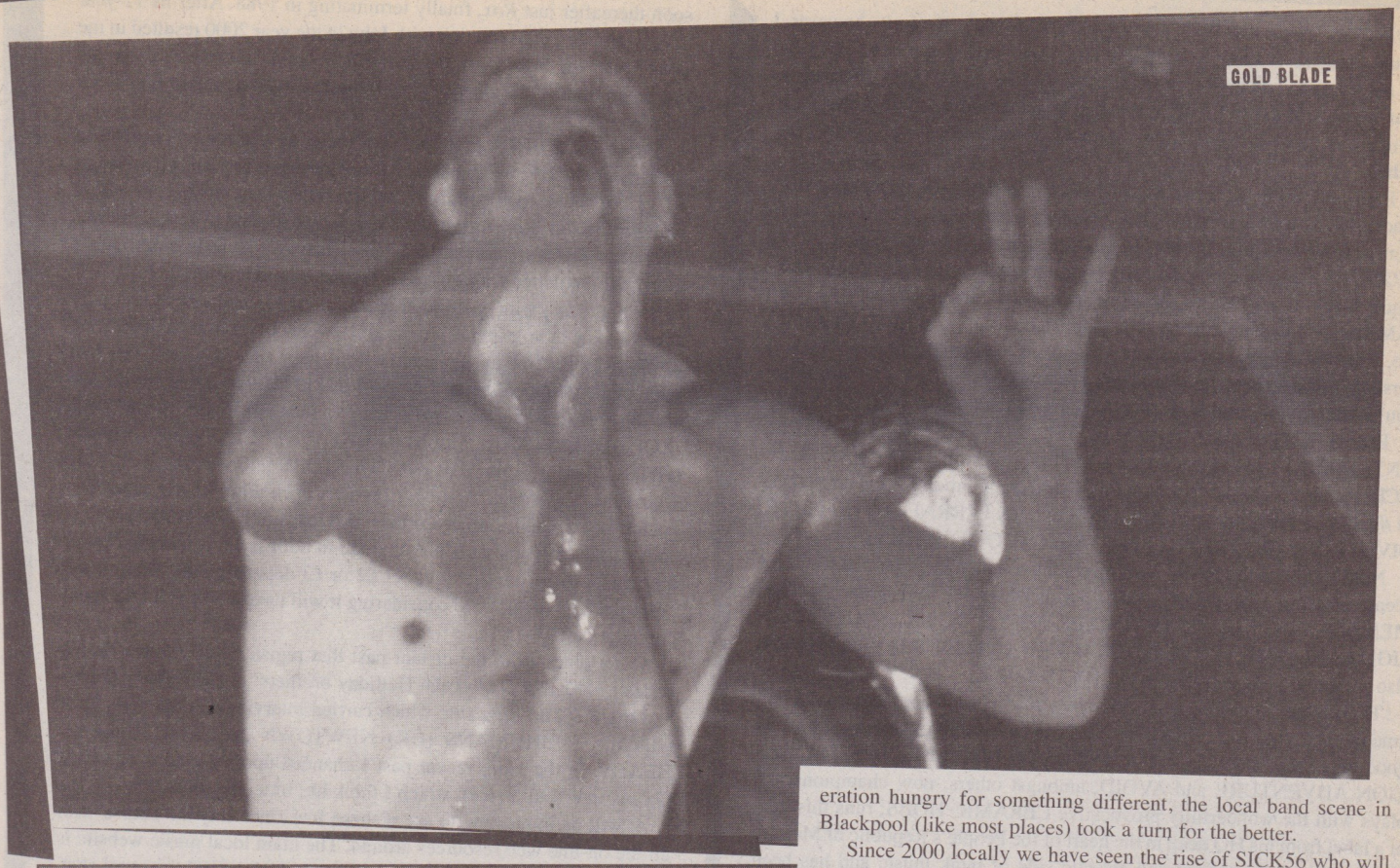
The full track listing and chronology of these bands is provided at the end of the article, however a few bands that should be noted as they provided a link between then and now are as follows. SECTION 25 and TUNNEL VISION were two bands signed to Factory records, and the former played a key role in setting up local gigs in the late '70s as they has access to a PA. SECTION 25 released four albums and five singles on the Factory label, reformed and played Summer Daze 2 (2005) and have just completed a sold out mini European tour and returned to their JOY DIVISION/MAGAZINE sounding roots—as evidenced on their live track on UTAB2.

ONE WAY SYSTEM (still gigging and recording new material) is probably the best known of the early '80s (third wave) of bands, however other distinct notables that played a big role were THE FITS fronted by the charismatic Mick Crudge and sleazy local noise merchants THE GENOCIDES. Born in the early '80s but coming to the fore in the mid/late 80s were local heroes THE MEMBRANES fronted by GOLDBLADE leader, journalist, author and UK day-time TV personality John Robb. THE MEMBRANES, in addition to another really great band called SIGN LANGUAGE, got pretty extensive media and national airplay with cool songs such as *Tatty Seaside Town* and *Muscles*, most of which are featured on an Anagram compilation from 1999. John has just authored a book *Punk Rock: an Oral History* on Ebury Press and his band play Blackpool regularly at both festivals (HITS and Summer Daze) and smaller shows (Royal Oak etc).

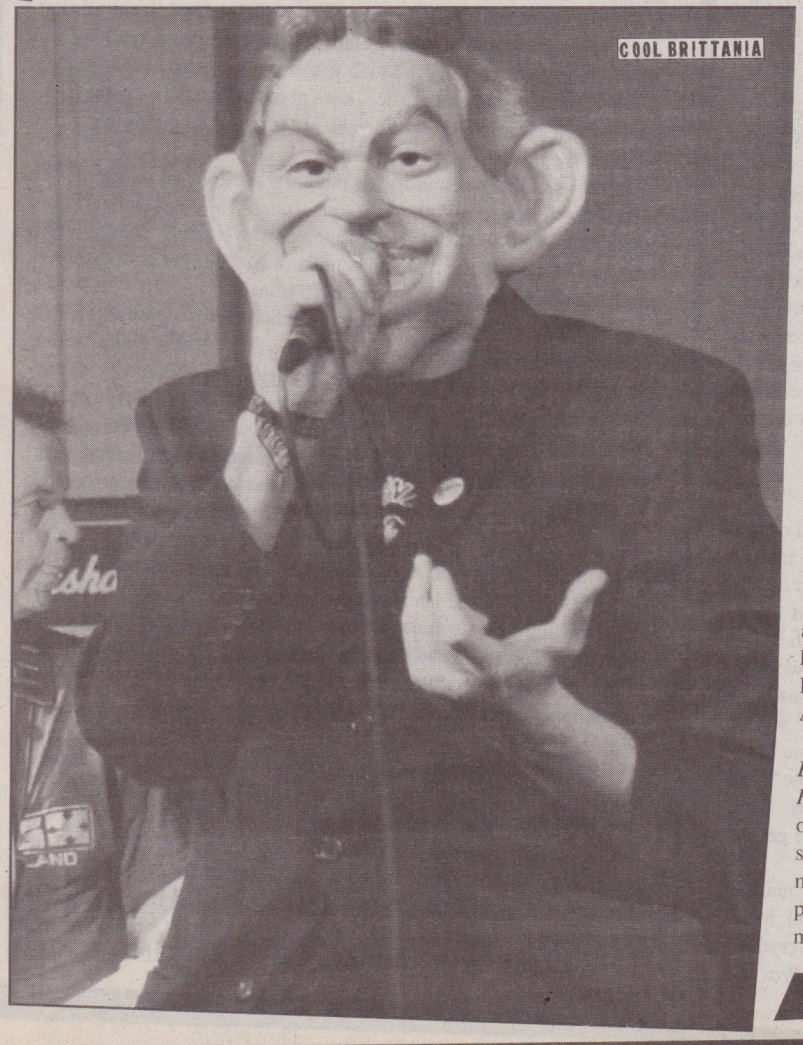
Moving in to the '90s when punk rock was catching its breath before its rather surprising re-emergence into modern culture, there was a relative dearth of bands on the local scene, and ironically I maintain this was one of the best times in a number of ways. A few of us working in and around my old band ERASE TODAY started putting on and playing gigs with bands such as LEATHERFACE, GREEN DAY, NATION OF ULYSEES, OFFSPRING, GUNS N WANKERS, ECONOCHRIST, and NOFX when these bands were pulling crowds of 60 or 70 people, sometimes far less. The small, neat collective attitude surrounding those times was good and it is interesting to chart the rise of some of these bands—we all knew these bands were great, it was just the rest of the world that didn't.

Aside from ERASE TODAY, TAKE LINDY SURFING, PINK TORPEDOES, FES PARKER, and maybe KING MOB ECHO there were very few Blackpool bands in that decade that would be filed under the heading punk rock. Sure, lots of great bands like the CONTAINER DRIVERS, SHRINK, CERAMIC HOBS, THE PHANTOM CREEPS, THEE TRANSMISSIONS but not (at that time anyway) what we would call punk.

With the upload of punk rock through the mechanisms of the internet, and some heavy top down investment from our corporate friends at such holy places as Warner Brothers, EMI, BMG, Sony, Universal, and others and largely uploaded courtesy of an MTV gen-



GOLD BLADE



COOL BRITTANIA

eration hungry for something different, the local band scene in Blackpool (like most places) took a turn for the better.

Since 2000 locally we have seen the rise of SICK56 who will be touring the US next year, and have their follow up album out in August or September on JSNTGM (UK) and SOS (USA), the re-emergence of ONE WAY SYSTEM gigging throughout Europe, and most recently the return of SECTION 25. In addition to these more recognizable bands there is a real rash of other bands that have either released good music or are active locally: HIGGINS++, UFX, RAZOR DOG, 180 DEGREES, LITTER-BUG, SENTON BOMBS, and a couple of really cool female bands PINK HEARSE and SWALLOW.

In addition to these there are a whole bunch of really young bands and a few good day time all ages shows that have been staged in the past few months. We are hoping to get this a regular monthly thing under the name Avalanche of Sound. All ages during the day and then out of town bands at night on the same day. Of the rich young crop of bands the most well known are OUT-LAW and DOWNFORCE, both of which are veterans of the Summer Daze festival at such tender ages, and the former are on UTAB2 this summer. DOWNFORCE would have been save for some technical corruptions on their hastily put together CD that prevented it being written to CD (shame really as it was a good track).

Other names of newer local bands to watch out for are the amazing WHEN PEOPLE BECOME NUMBERS who should have their debut album out very soon, THE SENTON BOMBS, KRAUL, LIMOUSINE and the reclusively excellent WALTER AND THE KNOBHEADS.

Many of these bands are featured on the *Ugly Truth about Blackpool* CDs. Volume 1 was given away free with *Blackpool Rox II* fanzine (issue eight) and fingers crossed Volume 2 will be out August 2006 with *Blackpool Rox II* fanzine (issue nine), all supported and financed by the bands. I should point out that it was made possible by Arts Council money and has resulted in a couple of *overground* shows with BBC radio, which some of you might regard as us "getting chummy with the invaders" (*Tim Yo*

MRR 1988—Some Of Yr Friends Are Already This Fucked), however I would disagree whole-heartedly and defend what we have done and what we are trying to roll out on a UK basis as a series of *The Ugly Truth about your town*. Still as we know in this age of uncertainty—God is Dead and there are no right answers….only opinions/perspectives !

Labels

I am only aware of a handful that have operated or are operating from Blackpool. Is four a handful? The first was Lightbeat run by local entrepreneur (now taxi driver) Barry Lights. I met him a few times, once after a HIGGINS++ gig where he heartily congratulated us on a Cooper Clarke-esque black narrative we had just performed about having sex with JAMIROQUAI, cannibalising him and then concealing his remains in a big pie, which was then sold and eaten by police men conducting the missing persons (murder) investigation. Dark I know, buy hey that's modernity for you! It creates the conditions that make us do (and write) strange things.

Barry's label released records by THE FITS, ONE WAY SYSTEM, ANTI-SOCIAL, and from further a field the likes of EXTERNAL MENACE. He also did what is now a fairly rare compilation LP called *A Drop In the Ocean* featuring local bands PURE PINK PARRAFIN, THE ELITE, DIVERT OFF CENTRE, THE FRETS and ZOO BOUTIQUE.

Next up was John Robb' Vinyl Drip label which championed the local scene releasing a couple of great seven-inch compilations, featuring THE MEMBRANES, KENNETH TURNER SET, SYNTAX, SECTION 25, SIGN LANGUAGE, LOVE 30, CRACK HOUSE, FIFTH COLUMN, and also some out of town releases by BOG SHED.

Third is the longest running and most prolific local label in terms of volume of output has to be Pumf, which is run by local luminary and all-round good egg, Stan. Stan who had stints with THE MEMBRANES, DANDELION ADVENTURE and AVOID, amongst others, now champions and plays with the wonderfully provocative CERAMIC HOBS, runs this gem of a label from his HQ deep in the heart of the People's Republic of Marton. He champions the quirky and eclectic side of punk music and has been active with his series of *Godspunk* compilations, which have featured local and not so local acts. His website is well worth a visit, and very humorous to boot www.pumf.net.

Label number four is my sacrificial offering to the god of music, Just Say No To Government Music. JSNTGM Records (doesn't it just slip off the tongue?) started up in 1990 and has been running on empty ever since. So far we have 20 releases and key names that readers might recognize would be HOOTON 3 CAR, FOUR LETTER WORD, Z28, SICK56, DINA, TRAVIS CUT, ERASE TODAY, a few local compilations and split 7"s, plus the UTAB series. As the UTAB thing has been so comprehensive and so well received we are seriously thinking of rolling this out throughout the UK in conjunction with other zines focusing on their local scenes. I am currently talking with Andy Culture from *Beat Motel* about doing and *Ugly Truth About Ipswich* for instance. Regarding JSNTGM, I have three new releases lined up for August, so the label keeps me busy and out of pocket, as well as depressed.

Fanzines and Media

Now I always believe fanzines are the most direct route into the soul of any town or city. If you look at Leeds for instance there are probably ten (or more) cool fanzines spreading the good disease. Blackpool is by no means prolific in the zine world, however there are two well-established zines, which get a fairly wide readership, *Four Minute Warning And Blackpool Rox Ii*, and a legacy of other zines that have graced the punk rock world..

Mitch who runs *Four Minute Warning* is up to issue ten and has been running it for about five years. It is very much in the old school hand/paste/drawn design, and the music/bands/reviews featured are similarly of and old school vein. I'd better be careful what or I say or she'll kill me—heh, heh. Bands interviewed recently include SICK56, THE EXPLOITED, VICE SQUAD, GBH, and KILLING JOKE, so you get my drift.

Blackpool Rox II on the other hand has had a somewhat more unusual history. The original *Blackpool Rox* was started by John Robb back in the heady days of 1978, a classic hand scribbled affair, highlighting everything local. This ran for 17 issues before it became *Blackpool/Preston Rox*, and soon thereafter just *Rox*, finally terminating in 1988. After its 12-year disappearance a conversation with John in the year 2000 resulted in me taking over the baton and re-starting *Rox* again. In order to delineate the generations of the zine we agreed that it should be called *Blackpool Rox II*.

Blackpool Rox II started out very much as a crude mechanism to focus on promoting and building a local scene as I felt Blackpool needed a jab of punk rock culture in its arm rather than smack. Any more high profile stuff such as touring bands I used to send over to Dave and Russell at *Fracture*. At first *Blackpool Rox II* was little more than a glorified newsletter with gig/record reviews, and a resource for bands to communicate with each other. Back in 2000 I had access to a high speed copier, at no expense, so the zines were copies in runs of 500 and given away for free at gigs and in local indie record stores. The free photocopier stopped' being free, so I had to start charging from issue six onwards. Issue nine will have interviews with Steve Lake (ZOUNDZ), Frankie Stubbs (LEATHERFACE), Jenny Russell (HITS), Murphy from THE INOCULATORS interviewing Bad Andy who runs *Hollywood Anarchy*, possibly Tim Fite (if his label can answer my emails), amongst others, and loads of columns and articles, so it marks quite a significant upgrade in both style, content and, volume and will be on sale at either £2 or £3 depending on what all the costs stack up to. Not bad considering it will have a 24 track DIY local compilation CD with it.

Other zines from the distant past that register with me are Stan's series of *Sex Hat Dance*, the Halliday brothers' one-off *Fylde Enemy* and my *Eat The Rich* zine which carried interviews in the early '80s with the SUBHUMANS (UK) NEWTOWN NEURTICS, and A-HEADS. In the more recent past I chanced upon a local zine called *Groovestew* (lad' name), which I think has bitten the dust.

It will be interesting to see if these few zines stay the course with all the on-line web resources around. The main local music website is www.Blackpoolbands.co.uk run by Skell, which has all the usual chat, gig guide and band related information. This does prove really useful when it comes to keeping in touch with what to cover locally in *Rox*. A quick cursory surf on the site shows about 50 bands as being registered which is probably about right in terms of functioning/gigging bands in the town.

Other useful web resources are the www.prestone.co.uk site, which is mainly focussed on the Preston scene—15 miles inland from Blackpool—and Paul's growing site, northwestbands.co.uk, which stretches to include the regional centers of Manchester and Liverpool (both cities are about a 45 minute drive from Blackpool).

The main overground source of music/band information is the local evening newspaper (*Blackpool Evening Gazette*). Robin Duke, despite all the grief he gets from various sources, runs features most evenings on bands, their releases, and gigs. For instance he ran cool features and reviews on a lot of the Royal Oak punk nights. Being a commercial venture the *Gazette* sells advertising space and as such I imagine the space available for coverage of bands and the local scene bears a direct relationship to the success of the telesales team. For instance if they sell space to seductive offerings like *The Rod Stewart Musical*, *Queen perform Ga Ga*, or even *A Special Night with Bernard Manning*, then the print space for the latest release by WALTER AND THE KNOBHEADS diminishes somewhat, and as ever I guess this is out of the journalist's control. News or mammon? Well as the main man Rupert Murdoch once opined "We are not in the news industry…we are in the entertainment industry."

Gigs

Blackpool has had its fair share of gigs over the years and throughout the history of rock 'n' roll more generally I guess, however it is currently probably best known for the annual Holidays in the Sun festival. The Hits festival this year has over 170 bands playing on four stages over four days. It started out in 1996 in Blackpool and since then has sort of alternated between Morecambe and Blackpool. It is a big social gathering, which takes place at the Winter Gardens, which is the central location for entertainments in Blackpool. HITS champions

all sorts of punk although it is regarded widely focusing primarily on the old school.

I will be dividing my time this year racing between the Leeds Out Of Spite Festival offering the likes of LEATHERFACE, SPIRIT OF ST LOUIS and MILLOY and the HITS fest in BLACKPOOL.

In the late '70s the main locations for gigs tended to be The Mecca (now a bowling alley, cart racing place), Jenks (an incarnation of which still exists) and The Norbreck Castle. Key gigs way back when were from touring bands such as THE SAINTS, JOY DIVISION, and AC-DC. The later '70s saw the Mardi Gras hosting U2, THE FALL, and THE HIGSONS to small crowds whilst bigger touring bands such as THE BOOMTOWN RATS, THE JAM, SPECIALS, and MADNESS played circuit venues like the ABC and The Winter Gardens. To see most of the main touring bands like THE CLASH, RAMONES, THE CURE, ECHO AND THE BUNNYMEN you had to get a lift or a bus up to Lancaster University, but they stopped the MAIN HALL gigs in the mid '80s. A good third wave festival held in 1981 at the Bier-Keller with ONE WAY SYSTEM, PTTB, ABRASIVE WHEELS and THE ADICTS (I think) laid the foundations for a lot of future gigs upstairs at this venue in the mid '80s. TOY DOLLS, ANGELIC UPSTARTS, NEWTOWN NEUROTICS, GBH, and CHELSEA all paid a few visits. This was rather irksome as I was at college in Manchester at this time and believe me, Manchester was crap for gigs (except for JILLIES which staged CONFLICT, BROKEN BONES, THE ENEMY, POISON GIRLS, and GBH), so the *Swapmeet Kid* and I would need to catch the train/bus back home to watch these bands.

The local gig watching scene throughout the years now is still split between the bigger bands BLONDIE, PAUL WELLER, EMBRACE, and ARCTIC MONKEYS, playing the "bus in and bus us the hell outta here" big band venues like the Winter Gardens, and the local initiatives that have been happening at the likes of Jenks, The West Coast, The Blue Rooms, Beat, The Royal Oak and The Tache. There is certainly more going on locally than ever before with local gigs. Most weekends all year round Julian at Jenx and Andy at The West Coast have a mixture of local and regional bands from Manchester, Preston, and Lancaster. Bands also play at the now well-attended monthly theme nights at West Coast are run by Digger (punk night) and Andy Odd-Boots (goth night) which have both been running for the last six months, and are creating neat little communities of like minded people. Additionally there are the Blackout and Feltch Night collectives which are run by and thus cater for a network of bands such as STORMY WEATHERS, CSOD, WHEN PEOPLE BECOME NUMBERS etc

Over the past three years a thriving little venue, The Royal Oak in Poulton, on the outskirts of Blackpool, has become really popular owing very much to the hard work of Paul and Carl Swinnerton. This is a small venue which can hold about 150 and these well staged gigs have included, in addition to a raft of local bands, the likes of THE BUSINESS, PHINIUS GAGE, RED AS MONKEY, CRASHED OUT, THE EPOXIES, THE BRIEFS, TV SMITH, THE VIBRATORS, GOLDBLADE, THE DEAD PETS, DEADLINE, PISTOL GRIP, and INSTANT AGONY.

Attempts by a few of us and particularly Julian and Nigel at Millenium to try and bridge the gap by staging in-between size acts like JOE STRUMMER AND THE MESCALEROS and Jello Biafra, resulted in either barely covering costs or a whopping loss—as happened with me when I put Jello Biafra on at Blackpool Football Club…we almost got the venue for free and still it cost me a grand! So although the town can support some good and cool initiatives, and reasonable sized bands, anything getting above that type of radar and in the zone of chart celebrity fandom is either grabbed by the big concert promoters like SJM, or left to hang for us gullible but kind hearted locals like us to take a gamble and lose.

One final annual event worth mentioning is the Summer Daze festival, which takes place on the last weekend in August. This August will be its third year and it is certainly gaining momentum each year. It is a free all day open air festival featuring 12-15 local bands doing short sets. Last year over 500 people turned up to see the likes of GOLDBLADE, SECTION 25, PERFECT RIOT, GARLAND GREEN, OUTLAW, SOUND OF SUPERSTRING, HIGGINS++, and DOWNFORCE. This year we hope to be setting up gigs in the West Coast and Blue Room all weekend so it can

become a sort of Summer Daze weekend for loads of underground bands rather than just the eight hour festival in the local park.

Venues

Venue size has always been a bit of a block to staging certain bands. Aside from The Tache and Beat, which are the biggest of the small clubs comfortably holding 250/300 people, if you want a mid sized 500-600 venue then you are struggling. You then enter the realm of venues such as the Winter Gardens, who can sell out shows like RADIOHEAD, ARCTIC MONKETS, KINGS OF LEON, RICHARD ASHCROFT and FUNERAL FOR A FRIEND, in a couple of days with minimal advertising, but obviously local initiatives cannot click their fingers and make the same thing happen.

Initiatives

The local council set up a task force in 2003 with the aim of finding a central location in Blackpool where artists, labels, photographers and anyone working in the creative industries could locate their enterprise. Similar experiments in larger cities such as Manchester (Mount Street) and Birmingham (Custard Factory) have worked well but for a variety of reasons this has not progressed. A few people within the council have been pretty supportive of events such as Summer Daze, Wah Wah, UTAB1 providing assistance wherever possible

The moving picture is playing an increasing role these days and the local higher education college does specialise in related areas so there is a growing community in this area. Boz Philips of AVOID, who has been a key figure on the local punk scene for many years, is a filmmaker who sets up regular local showcases of short films at Blott studios—always keen to get more contributors involved she is available on bcphillips@uclan.ac.uk. Another really great focus for local bands is the *Ten*: 10 series run by filmmaker and record sleeve designer James Wolstenholme. This project involves ten local bands getting assigned ten local filmmakers, who then each shoot the band's video and the output gets incorporated into a video-production which gets showcased one evening at the local Odeon cinema. This is good experience for the filmmaker, a free video for the band and a chance to showcase to a wider audience. So far James has done two of these events.

Record Stores

The demise of the local independent record store is something close to all of our hearts. Blackpool now has two chains, HMV and Music Zone, and a few independents such as Cobweb in Poulton, Saddle Records in Layton, Records And Relics, in the town center (Twisted Clothing also carries a few local titles), The Beach Market and Melody House in South Shore. These deal variously in new and second hand vinyl, CDs and tapes, as well as books, and DVDs. Our Price and Virgin both passed through in the '90s, but disinvested as fast as they had invested. The nearest strong independent that carries a good stock of our music is Action in Preston, and then further afield there's Piccadilly and Vinyl Solution in Manchester, and Probe in Liverpool. In the late '70s Blackpool boasted a whole bunch of good independent stores: Sinfonia, Music Mania 1 and 2, Ray's Melody Inn/Graffiti, Supercards. The only remaining one from those halcyon days is Dave at Cobweb.

The local gigs at the Royal Oak always have a few stands with records and clothes. The main local punk rock dealer is Paul Swinnerton's North Records and the heaviest user of this junk is personal long time friend and *Blackpool Rox II* contributor, The Swapmeet Kid, who on recent estimates has over 25,000 punk rock records and CDs. We released Jello Biafra into the *Swapmeet's* bunker in October 2003, and he didn't emerge until January 2004, and that was after some coaxing, heh heh.

OK, so that's about it I reckon. Apologies to any elements I have not included. Below are links to some of the websites and resources I have mentioned.

—Andy Higgins (late July 2006)

Local Resources

Labels – www.pumf.net www.jsntgm.com

Bands / Gigs – www.Blackpoolbands.co.uk www.northwestbands.co.uk

Film – www.northwestfilm.co.uk

Overground Media – www.Blackpooltoday.co.uk

Record outlets – www.north-records.co.uk

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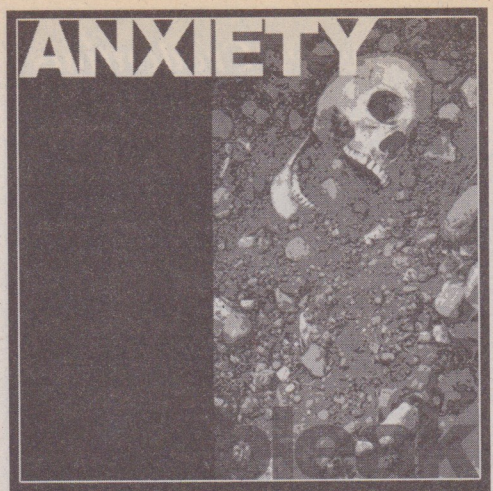

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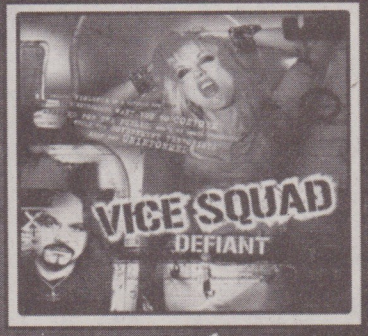

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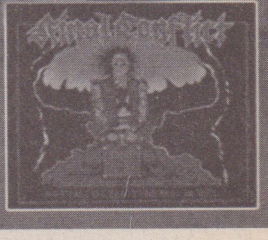

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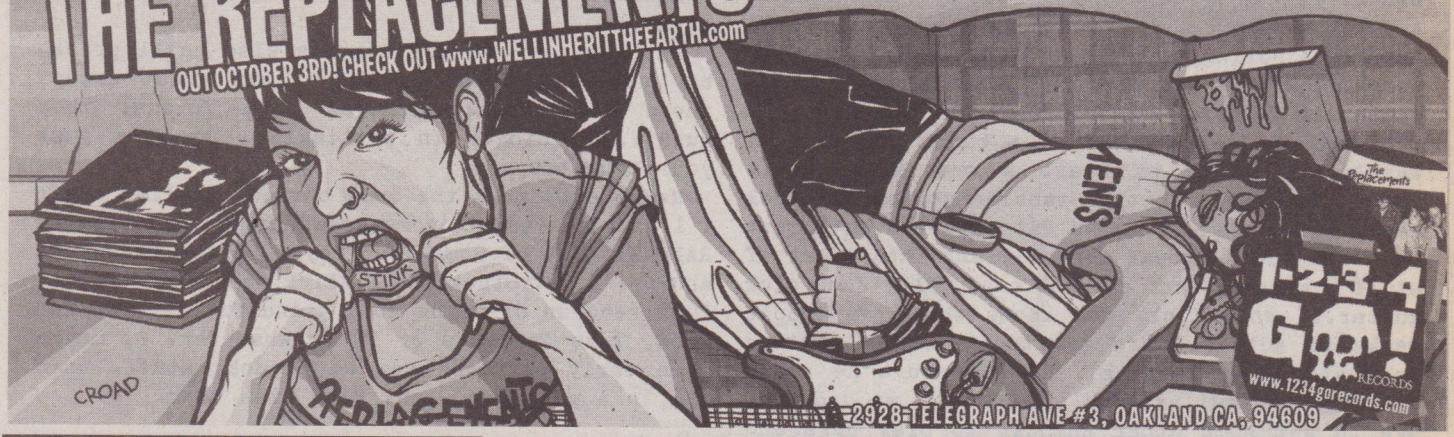

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Brash and snotty, Italy's Out With a Bang doesn't give a fuck about trends and shits on your opinion-and it's not a schtick! Fronted by the same wildman who sang for the infamous Grabbies-you know, the guy at the show with the bloodied face and crooked grin-Out With a Bang sounds something like classic LA punk (think Red Cross or the Germs) but with a twisted take on that old sound of their own.

This interview was conducted over email with Anus, the appropriately named singer of Out With a Bang. Out of a handful of average interview questions, Anus turns in something atypical, funny, and insanely punk. Interview and introduction by Golnar Nikpour.

Who is in Out with a Bang? How did you find each other?

Awwwk! Awesome... I forgot that *all* interviews are kinda boring, ain't they? Out With A Bang was born about two years ago or something, after I came back from San Francisco-where I had escaped the Italian lack of fun for a bunch of years. I wasn't expecting to start a new band really (after all those shitty Grabbies years) but fuck me if back here in Verona Hatecity I didn't meet this kid who's a real asshole, *and* into a lot of stuff I am into, *and* said he could play some sick guitar... *and*, fuck, god knows why in a couple weeks we actually *did* get together (as opposed to what *always* happens), he *did* prove he could destroy that guitar, and shockingly, we *did* manage to get some other shmucks to play bass and drums with us too. And we're fucking still at it...crazy!

Right now Out With A Bang is-other than myself at vocals-Mic on guitar, Emy on bass, and Piero on drums. He's our third drummer, as the old ones could not take the general drunk hostility of the band-if you wanna call it that...eh! And if you wanna know, everybody also has been (some is?) in a number of other (useless) bands, some even (ex-)members, at some point, of the Grabbies (the Italian years). Wow!!!

OK-that was the long version. The short (better) one is: Me is a stupid drug addict fuck who was in shit Grabbies band. Me is back in Italy from the US (where I would like to be still). Me met with some new fucks and some old fucks, who are listed above or below or wherever. We have started a new band together. Me believes this one band is very good punk rock band. Fuck you.

What's up with Italian punk? Is there even a single other good band out there?

I would say...umm...no. Most are generic and boring (if well done) or just downright lame. Zero attitude. Lots of dumb ass politics and a big fucking lack of sense of humor. Or weak fucking boy scouts who play MTV rock (but call that punk)-you all know the type. Or others who think that wearing sunglasses and (gag) sharp clothing would make their CRAP into good old American rock and roll... All fucking embarrassing shit. There are exceptions, but I guess you gotta find 'em yourself. (Here's one-El Conquistador, he's great.)

But hey, if you ask someone else he'll probably say-yes, a lot of bands, all great except those nazi drunk assholes from Verona, they suck...the singer in particular. So it's just your take baby.

Me, pretty much the only current Italian stuff I like right now is some great, mean, drug-fueled RAP shit out of Rome-Truceboys, In the Panchine, and the like. Otherwise I stick to the *old* Peggio Punx records or maybe some grind-fuck stuff. You know, like Comrades or CB or whatever. Or maybe some early eighties new wavy punky stuff, when I'm in a gay mood...eh. Blah blah blah.

Do you play shows? Do people like you live or do you just get shit thrown at you?

We play as much as we can, like every other band-unfortunately I've gotta say it happens quite rarely. But that's the way it is if you don't participate in the suck-each-others-cock-scenegame-bullshit thing. It's here in Italy just like everywhere else... *plus*, we're also god-damned lazy, and that does not help either...true. When we do get a show, it seems that we could be really fucked and not play a single complete song, or be right on it, excellent(!!) through *all* of our glorious 15-20 minute set. Or both at the same time, haha...depends on the mood and on the amounts of legal and not-so-

legal drugs consumed that night, and on the reaction of the crowd of course (if you can call a crowd like 10 to 30 morons tops). Retarded fun in all cases, might I say, if you can enjoy the chaos. If not, you don't wanna be around us you quack! Anyways, "to get shit thrown at you" I always consider a success! I mean, c'mon, what do you do when you like a band? I attack them back. Isn't it like that for everybody? No?

How did y'all hook up with Vida Loca Records?
The label's run by a longtime friend of mine-she liked our stuff and she wanted to participate 50% on wastin' some money on our fuckrecord debut funtime (together with PTIB Records, which is in fact myself and King Karaoke, aka the Grabbies' guitar fucker). As simple as that. Or maybe she wanted to balance some of the dyke punk shit she's put out in the past with some serious manly rock...yeah?

It seems like OWAB doesn't really give a fuck what people think. Is this just an act, a way to seem more punk?
Actually, our manager thought we could sell more records this way, and get more bitches. So far, it has not really worked. I'll let you know about future scores. The man also suggested to get a girl in the band (and we did) so when the feminist-type ladies or the eunuchs who need to pretend to be all political and sensitive to try to get laid would bitch at my lyrics, I would just point at her. Thanx for askin' this. Me really liked this one question.

Recently, your old band the Grabbies was featured on a 7" comp put out by one of the guys from Webelos/Grupo Sub-1. It featured a lot of bands I didn't know, but bands that had similar lo-fi punk-as-fuck sounds. Who are OWAB's peers in the punk scene?
Um, I don't really speak English and I don't know what a fucking peer is. If it's what I think, I would say any stupid band who's full of blind fucking hate for the universe and likes to try and play their shit raw and not totally by the fucking numbers...and *maybe* get fucked drunk and high in the process, havin' fun ruinin' everybody else's evening...you know? Got the idea? Bands whose members are probably considered fucking assholes by most, haha. These days I like to spin shit by bands like Shoot It Up, Homostupids, Mr. California, Brainwashed Youth, Darvocets (and anything on that fucking Non-Commercial Records...Inmates!) Formaldehyde Junkies...along with many others. Loved that Clockcleaner shit...Mangina was a great band I just saw live...the list goes on and on, but who cares? Go like your own stupid bands, yeah?

Some pointed out to me that we sound like one of those new "'80s American HC/punk revival-type groups"...well shit, we may a bit, *but* even though we sure listen and fuckin' love all that stuff-together with a *lot* of different shit-we do not fucking try and emulate that. Fuck all that. This I would like to say, 'cause it's sad and fucking pathetic to see all those lame "Black Flag cover bands" with no balls whatsoever, or real hangst or nothing, bein' so hyped these days, when most of them actually suck cock big time. For instance (what I heard of) Career Suicide sounded to me like NoFX covering the Germs (remember the "Criminals" from Berkeley, anyone? Uuuuggg!), and Regulations' lyrics are so stupid *dumb* that if I could make myself believe that they're like a parody or something, I would totally love them! Cops are bad!!!!!! Goverment's evil!!!!! Owowowo!!!! Enough??

That Spanish comp 7" came out like eight years late, and morphed into something completely different than what the Webelos guy told the Grabbies to participate in, back in the days-a Rip-Offs covers record, haha. I don't know anything about any of those bands. But most of it is pretty fucking good, with the exception of our song, which is a lame joke and not much else...

Even though OWAB's aesthetic focuses on simple/stupid, it seems like there is thought put into the final product. Who did the art for the album?
OWAB's aesthetic focuses right in everyone's fucking ass-Jesus Christ, I don't speak journalism, sorry. Anyways, if you care, the (superb) art was done by Mic the guitarfuck with (very little) help by myself here and there, and

Giulias Vida Loca for the labels. It rules over your Photoshop-skull-hardcore-whatever-new-record's art 100%, anyplace, anytime, no doubt. Just as much as the shit-music wrapped in it. Fuck off, all of you.

I hear there are people crazy enough in the world who want to release more OWAB material. What's next for the band?

Yep. We're not over yet. We just got done recording seven new cuts (including a cover of Mr. California's best "I'm Goin' Home"). We don't know yet if it's gonna be a new 12" or a 7" or whatever-the-fuck...but it's a'coming. Criminal IQ should be the label, if the cunt doesn't back off after he actually listens to the new shit... Also Fashionable Idiots Records may repress the *I'm Against It* 12" on a 7" with some small changes, for the Yankee market, I think. Oh yeah, and we're plannin' on coming over to "tour" in the US soon enough-how do you like that? To be honest, right now there are more friends/labels that want to put some OWAB stuff out than OWAB songs to be released. I see that as a fucked up mystery I won't ever even begin to try to uncover... Still, we can't get a fucking show...hahaha, lame.

I have to say, I totally laughed out loud when I first looked at your Myspace page. It says, "Out With a Bang shit on your opinion, and don't give a fuck about your comment." And it's true! You won't leave people's comments up. Why even bother with the page?

A Myspace question?????? Ug!! I was told that thing's an easy way for morons to check out your band, and also an easy way to insult them same morons *while* they actually sit there and *do* check it out...and it's magically free of charge. So why not? But the "comments" are way too much for me to take though...all that "I'm gonna be fun and clever and cute" shit makes me fucking gag...I mean, check the band out if you want, laugh at us, write me if you must, leave...why in the fucking hell should I (or anybody) be interested in readin' your oh-so-funny in-jokes? Fuck.

Does it bother you when people take OWAB too seriously?

It does piss me off when people take themselves too seriously. Themselves, their stupid music, or any-fucking-thing really. We live in a bad fucking joke. Better fucking laugh at it. But Christ I don't believe *that* has ever happened (nor will) to us...thank god. How can anybody take seriously something as stupid as a punk rock band anyways? Any of them all? Bah-wake up you gullible fucks!!!!

FAST TIMES AT HAWTHORNE HIGH
PRE-TEEN PUNK ROCK BABYLON WITH REDD KROSS

By Chris Parker

It's the kid on the right you notice first. Take him away and Redd Kross look like any bunch of standard-issue 1979 punk rock teens, shot against a nondescript studio backcloth by ubiquitous LA photographer Birrer. On the left there's the drummer, Ron Reyes, a homeless Puerto-Rican runaway who flat-out refuses to acknowledge the camera; next to Ron there's guitarist Greg Hetson, a bright, eager, regular-looking kid with a Buzzcocks badge on the breast pocket of a chain-store shirt with buttoned-down epaulettes; then there's singer Jeff McDonald, a bemused beanpole with a Penelope Houston badge. But there's no getting round the incongruous sight of the kid beside Jeff, his bass-playing brother Steve, twelve years old, wary and defiant, a blank-generation Jimmy Osmond swaddled in puppy fat—a child who began the decade in diapers and ended it sharing stages with Black Flag.

In late 1980, aged 13, Steve disappeared. His family feared he had fallen victim to a local serial killer preying on young boys. Four months later he was brought home from Las Vegas with a twisted tale of teenage kicks, skewed celebrity and LA punk rock noir.

Jeff and Steve McDonald grew up a mile-and-a-half from Brian, Carl and Dennis Wilson, on another planet. Hawthorne in the early 1960s wasn't just the Beach Boys' hometown, it was Brian Wilson's muse—a template for the Southern California everyman suburban dream to which the band provided the soundtrack.

By 1978, what had been a blue-collar Shangri-La was turning post-apocalyptic. Hundreds of families living on Hawthorne's working-class northern edge were ordered to leave their homes as plans were drawn up for the extension of Interstate 105. As the project was delayed, long-term decay took hold of the districts earmarked for demolition. Meanwhile Jeff and Steve, 14 and 11, began hearing the first rumblings of punk rock on college radio stations. As old-world bands like X-Ray Spex sang about a future defined by consumer obsolescence, the McDonalds learned that the very environment into which they were born had been rendered disposable by the imperatives of economic growth. The 1979 Matt Dillon teen rebellion movie *Over the Edge* struck a deep chord with Jeff. "It was about a planned community that never took off. Ours was a planned community that was over."

If Hawthorne's planners had an ideal family in mind, the Wilsons and McDonalds fit the blueprint exactly. Murry Wilson sold machine tools. Terry McDonald, Steve and Jeff's father, worked as a welder. The McDonalds' neighborhood of 1940s tract houses was created to provide affordable 1000-square-foot nuggets of living space for workers in the defense and engineering industries clustered southwest of downtown LA. The monumental Standard Oil refineries were a short drive away in El Segundo. "We knew that was never going to be

REDD KROSS

our future," said Jeff. "We had the idea that we wanted to somehow make our lives a work of art."

Steve would explore vacant houses on his paper route. "Because of our proximity to LAX, there was a lot of prostitution traffic. Abandoned houses had been taken over as places to do business. In one I found prostitutes' clothes, empty tubes of modelling glue and a weird altar—Satan-worshipping, glue-sniffing hookers. The larger part of the Hawthorne community still lived a suburban utopian lifestyle, but we were surrounded by degeneration."

Jeff bought a cheap electric guitar after watching the Ramones and the Runaways on television. "I realised that by rearranging the chords I could make my own songs." Steve was in the classical orchestra at school, and conned his parents into buying him a bass for Christmas. The McDonalds recruited guitarist Greg Hetson, who went on to form Circle Jerks and later joined Bad Religion. "I was in a photo shop class with Steve. I saw a punk rock flyer on his notebook," said Greg. The band's first show was a graduation party for a friend-of-a-friend eighth-grader, Lisa Stangles. "We told her we'd get our friend's band to play at her house as well," said Steve. "We'd met them after a gig at a Moose Lodge in Redondo Beach a few months earlier." The friend was Greg Ginn; the band was Black Flag. "It blew us away, knowing there were people making this aggressive music in our local area, where everyone was into Sabbath or Led Zep. I think Black Flag were amused by us because we were these funny little punk rock kids."

Redd Kross (at the time Red Cross, until the aid agency threatened legal action) shared Black Flag's rehearsal space in a hippy-hangover craft center on Pier Avenue, Hermosa Beach, known as The Church. Drummer Ron Reyes had run away from home and bedded down within a closet in the basement of The Church—living arrangements so quintessentially "punk" they were deemed worthy of inclusion in Penelope Spheeris' 1981 documentary, *The Decline of Western Civilization*. Redd Kross became a regular support band to Black Flag and their name began to appear on the disturbing Raymond Pettibon-designed flyers pasted to telephone poles and fences throughout LA County.

Every moment outside school was spent practicing in the McDonalds' garage or at The Church. "Our parents were busy, and anyhow they were young and pretty accepting. They were glad we were doing something besides watching TV," said Jeff. "We'd get abuse from passing motorists, though. They'd usually shout 'Hey, Devo!' or 'B-52s!'"

"Liking punk rock in Southern California in 1978 was like stepping off a space ship," said Steve. "School was like *Fast Times at Ridgemont High*. In elementary school, I'd been a well-liked kid who fitted in; as soon as I got into punk, I became alienated. It was a trade-off—I was regarded as a freak but I became part of a larger scene in Hollywood and the South Bay. Our mom Janet came to California on her own at 18, from a town of 1000 people. When we turned up with dyed hair, she had a crying fit. Our dad was hard-ass, struggling to deal with artistic kids. But ultimately they were glad we had some sort of drive and motivation."

Janet Housden, a friend of the band who was to become its drummer, remembers that the prevailing culture of 1978 Hermosa Beach was "hippy conservative" to the extent that wearing straight-leg jeans could provoke street hassle. "It was really surprising how many adults, men and women, felt comfortable threatening 15-year-old girls with physical violence just for having freaky haircuts and clothes. I remember my friend and I going into a McDonald's and having the entire restaurant, customers and staff, chant 'Punk Sucks.'

"I'd been brought up in a family which was violently anti-rock 'n' roll—I wasn't even allowed to watch the Monkees. Then one night I was listening to the radio and for some reason, Doctor Demento played God Save the Queen and Blitzkrieg Bop back-to-back. I sat on my bed looking at my radio with my jaw dropped until the songs were over. This is what I'd been looking for my whole life. I still get the chills thinking about it."

Janet first met the McDonalds on July 22nd, 1979 at a punk rock mini-riot. Black Flag had tricked organisers of outdoor family events in Manhattan Beach into letting the band play a Sunday afternoon concert in Polliwog Park. As Black Flag began its assault, local families responded by throwing the contents of their picnic baskets and coolers at the stage. Steve and Jeff defended their friends, returning fire with the audience's own chicken legs and fruit.

After playing its first proper Hollywood show, supporting UXA, Redd Kross was approached by Robbie Fields, a British would-be punk impresario in the Brian Epstein mould who founded the Posh Boy label. "We were the first punk band from the South Bay who didn't have to pay for our recordings. We signed a contract that our parents never saw," said Steve. "We were not the most business-savvy kids. If someone called from the label, we'd play hot potato with the phone."

The resulting 12" EP was played intensively by KROQ's Rodney Bingenheimer. Its six songs, over in six-and-a-half minutes and rarely heard after 1980, are the Dead Sea Scrolls

of California brat-punk. While Hawthorne High School inspired the Beach Boys' "Be True to Your School," it provoked Redd Kross to supply a dark flipside. "I Hate My School" pre-empts every future John Hughes movie with a furious 56-second blast, tearing into cheerleaders, jocks, surfers and bookworms. The McDonalds' love/hate relationship with the dominant beach culture resurfaces on "Clorox Girls" and "Annette's Got the Hits," the latter inspired by iconic celluloid surf chick Annette Funicello. "Standing in Front of Poseur," with high-pitched lead vocals by a pre-pubescent Steve, chronicles the moves of teenage prostitutes who hung around outside a punk rock clothing store on Melrose Avenue. Greg Hetson's goofy shock-tactic lyrics on "S&M Party" didn't deter Steve and Jeff's grandma from wrapping up copies of the record as Christmas presents for the entire McDonald family.

The Posh Boy release made micro-celebrities of the McDonalds, bringing them into contact with an older crowd of music fans from the Hollywood-based punk scene. Among them was Dee Cochran, a 23-year-old secretary who lived with her mother and stepfather. Jeff and Steve began to spend time in her wood-panelled 1960s apartment beside the 10 freeway, taking diet pills and listening to the Stooges. "She was insanely charismatic," said Jeff. "She'd been going to Hollywood clubs since she was 16 and was a veteran of the early '70s glitter/glam scene," said Steve. "I was hyper impressed."

Dee was among a coterie of girls surrounding Darby Crash, frontman of the Germs, who strove to nurture his own cult of personality. The girls, sometimes known as Circle One, hung out at Oki Dog on Santa Monica Boulevard and identified themselves by circular "Germs burns" on their forearms. A follower was only qualified to give a burn if she had received one from Darby himself. Darby was a hero to Steve and Jeff and both enjoyed the association with Dee, who became a close friend. She shared the band's taste for trouble-making, joining them on vandalism sprees, starting fights with lowrider gangs and leading expeditions to a sex store called the Pleasure Chest to buy Locker Room amyl nitrate. "I used to use it in class," said Janet. "The teacher always seemed to call on me right after I'd taken a hit."

Back in the South Bay, Black Flag's notoriety grew, fuelled by a relentless graffiti campaign. The McDonalds weren't interested in the emerging hardcore punk scene, with its emphasis on a uniform look and a violent physicality that seeped in from Orange County surf culture. "There was quite a strict code of what was considered cool," said Steve. "We wanted to tease out our hair and be the New York Dolls." The McDonalds derided hardcore and its shaven-headed followers with the all-purpose insult "baldy." A sense of menace was creeping into many gigs, which would frequently morph into pitched battles with police departments determined to nip the "punk threat" in the bud.

The McDonalds began to nurture their own pop-cultural obsessions, raiding Video Archives in Manhattan Beach (alma mater of Quentin Tarantino) for cult films that were, at the time, almost impossible to find. "We used to go to the Nuart Theater to drop Blue Dragon blotter acid and watch *Pink Flamingos* and *Female Trouble* over and over again," said Janet. While heroin use was fast becoming the norm for virtually every Hollywood punk band, pills and alcohol still ruled in the South Bay. Speed snorted from capsules known as Black Beauties, bootleg Quaaludes and combinations of Doridan and Codeine known as Loads were all washed down with Mickey's Big Mouth beer or Olde English malt liquor.

Later, Redd Kross were to appear on the cover of *Flipside* magazine with a portrait of Charles Manson painted on the bass cabinet above the legend "Charlie Saves". Janet said, "If you grew up in Southern California in the 1970s, the Manson murders made a huge impression. My parents became convinced that anyone with long hair was a knife-wielding murderer just waiting for the chance to off some pigs. We somehow hit on the concept of pretending to worship Manson as if he were a pop star. I think we got the idea from John Waters."

Janet drove the band up to the house on Waverly Drive where Rosemary and Leno LaBianca were murdered by Manson's followers in 1969. "We took the whole thing too far and played ding-dong-ditchem." Jeff's birthday fell on the August 10 anniversary of the killings. "We hit on the idea of a Manson theme party at my house while my parents were gone," said Janet. "We decorated the walls with Manson slogans in fake blood—"Rise," "Political Piggy," and "Healter Skelter" (faithfully reproducing the Family's own spelling error) and stuck a butcher knife or two in the wall. Redd Kross played and the cops broke down the front door because we couldn't hear the doorbell."

Janet made another discovery when the fracas had died down: Steve and Dee had slept together in her parents' bed. "He was 13, she was 24. It didn't seem possible. I didn't really take it in."

It emerged that Steve had been just 12 when he lost his virginity to Dee, in her car after a Germs concert. "People in the punk scene pretended to be above sexuality, no matter what their sexuality was," said Jeff. "I was into older women who wanted nothing to do with me. Gay friends would suddenly disappear. The scene seemed very bohemian but people didn't deal with their sexuality at all. None of us was able to be a normal teen at the high school dance. None of us experienced that. So when Steve grew close to Dee, it didn't seem absurd."

"We spent most of our time getting drunk and taking drugs—speed, acid; the ecstasy equivalents of the day," said Steve. "It was my way of expressing my own identity away from Jeff's. We were very influenced by George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*—the concept of love being forbidden by society; by implication, the love of a grown woman and a minor."

Dee would return to a single underlying theme: she had one great love, a man whose heart was breaking because she had passed him over for Steve. "At the time, I understood her to be referring to Darby Crash. To me, it was like going out with a girl who had broken Mick Jagger's heart. Darby moved in the same circles as me, yet remained at a distance. He was a legendary figure within a group of about 200 people."

Terry and Janet would receive late-night phone calls from Steve, explaining that he was staying the night with a friend. "Their concern was outweighed by the relief that I wasn't going to die in a drink-driving accident. It was low behavior." The suspicions this aroused were confirmed by journals Steve had kept. "When news of the relationship got out, things changed. Their attitude was, we've been very supportive, very flexible in letting you be part of your brother's social life, but this is ridiculous, for reasons you can't yet understand. Jeff was freaked out about it too. I wasn't able to discuss it with him at all. I felt shut down by everyone."

Steve told Dee their relationship had to end. Days later, they saw one another at a punk rock show in Hollywood. Dee told Steve that her stepfather, Rick, had plans for her mother, Dee, and Steve to move to Las Vegas, claiming that Rick had volunteered to help Steve disguise his identity so that this could happen. "I thought, oh wow," said Steve. "I was so deep into this relationship, but I reasoned that I couldn't do it... Then I thought, maybe I can..."

A meeting between Steve and Rick, a heavy-drinking ex-

serviceman who had been dishonourably discharged, confirmed that the plan had the support of Dee's whole family. "Rick said he'd wait for me in Hawthorne the next morning. He asked which way I walked to school. He said he'd pick me up and take me to the desert, where I'd live for a week while the others got to Las Vegas and covered their tracks." Steve set off for school the next day. "I intended to go through with it, but I freaked at the last minute and walked a different way."

Steve saw Dee at what was to be the last ever Germs show, at the Starwood on December 3, 1980, just a few days after Steve's last-minute change of mind. "There was a heavy scene in her car. She was freaking out." Dee told Steve that she was pregnant with his child and that Darby Crash, her secret love, was devastated. "She told me if I didn't go with her, she'd have the child anyway."

At noon on December 8, Darby was found dead from a heroin overdose by Casey Cola, a friend with whom he'd made a suicide pact hours earlier. Casey woke but Darby did not. Some claim it had been a shot at immortality; if so, it had been profoundly mistimed. John Lennon was shot less than nine hours after Darby's death was discovered.

Dee told Steve that Darby had done it because of him. "I totally believed it. I had no reason not to. It fitted with everything she had told me. So I thought, we're in trouble. This time, I have to go."

Steve set off for school the next morning. Rick was waiting. He drove Steve for seven hours until they arrived at a dilapidated 1950s trailer on a desert lot in Kingman, Arizona. "Rick gave me cigarettes, almonds, water, a few copies of *Penthouse*, an AM radio, and some canned food I wouldn't even think about eating." All Steve had brought with him was his copy of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. "The first night I was crazy with loneliness and homesickness. I was there alone all week."

When Steve failed to come home, Jeff was sent to Hollywood to glean scraps of information from friends. Jeff rang Dee, who claimed to be equally concerned about Steve's whereabouts. Jeff trusted her implicitly, "more than I did my parents." When the Hawthorne police learned that Steve was involved in the punk scene, their interest evaporated—it was assumed that this made him prone to running away. Terry and Janet began to panic. Serial killer William Bonin, then known only as the Freeway Strangler, had terrorised the area for years, abducting and killing teenage boys.

Why didn't Steve call his family? "I can only explain it in terms of Stockholm Syndrome—it was like Patty Hearst falling in love with and protecting her captors: Rick and Dee had convinced me that they'd get life imprisonment if I said anything. They convinced me that all this was for me."

When Jeff discovered that Dee's apartment was empty, the McDonalds were given some hope. "I knew for definite he had gone with her. This became part of our parents' survival trip. They had to have faith, but for the first four days or so, we all believed he was the victim of kidnap or murder. Even after we realised it had to be Dee, we had no idea when or if we'd ever see him again. Our parents didn't really have any plan for getting him back. Mom was just miserable all the time. My only way of dealing with it was to smoke lots of pot." The Posh Boy 12" EP became the only tangible evidence of Steve ever having existed—the lead vocal on "Standing in Front of Poseur" and the backing vocals on "I Hate My School".

Rick turned up in Kingman a week after the initial drop-off, as promised. The pair drove to Las Vegas where they met Dee and her mother, who'd checked into a Travelodge on the Strip. "Rick eventually found us a condo in a dying housing development. Dee and I were like a husband and wife living with our in-laws. Every night we'd sit around and play peaknuckle. The only fear was that I'd step inside a casino and be picked up by security cameras." Steve dyed his blond hair brown. The family gave him the name Ted.

Steve tries to explain Dee's mother and stepfather's reasons for what they did. "Dee's mom just wanted to please her child, and she was highly aware that she'd failed miserably up until now. Rock and roll was Dee's life. She had albums of photos full of Jeff and I on stage. By taking me with them, they were trying to do the right thing by Dee—I was seen as a weird mutant kid, a mini rock-star who had become tied to the family unit."

The McDonalds hired a private detective. In the spring of 1981, Rick was traced via a PO Box in Kingman and the police in Las Vegas were tipped off. "Three cops burst into the apartment. It was 4 PM and I was naked on the bed. I hid behind an egg-box foam mattress cover until one of the cops reached behind it and grabbed me." Steve spent the night in Juvenile Hall. Next morning, Terry and Janet arrived to collect him. "I had breakfast with the other kids but I was anxious to avoid all the physical activities they had to do afterwards."

Janet said, "Terry and Janet looked like they'd aged ten years. It was awful. I remember they kept the Christmas tree up until he came home." No action was taken against Dee and her family as Steve insisted they weren't to blame and refused to press charges.

Steve and Jeff formed a new version of Redd Kross with Janet and guitarist Tracy Lea, the 15-year-old daughter of *Dracula Sucks* director Phillip Marshak. "She'd come from the Hollywood punk band Castration Squad and looked exactly like Elizabeth Taylor in *National Velvet*. She would play three chords then cry, and was sick all the time. When we finally got to play the Whisky, she nodded off on her feet. We weren't as urban as her. We were still very protected, cocooned in Hawthorne." The band recorded its first album, *Born Innocent*. It covered a Charles Manson song, recorded by the Beach Boys as "Never Learn Not to Love." The McDonalds reinstated its original title, "Cease to Exist."

A kind of normality returned, along with the embarrassment and paranoia particular to members of punk bands living with their parents in the pre-cellphone era. "I had to wait for them to call me when they wanted to practice. I was like being in jail," said Janet. "Then we'd have to wait for Steve and Jeff to get ready, which meant taking numerous bong hits while watching *What's Happening*. Once we had to call it off after Jeff decided to try huffing paint. We were fascinated by the juvenile delinquent culture of days gone by."

Steve remembers Lydia Lunch calling him up when she came to LA. "She said, 'I know you're in Hawthorne, but can you take the bus?' It was like having Marianne Faithfull call me." The band appeared in Dave Markey's determinedly trashy low-budget movie *Desperate Teenage Lovedolls* in 1982. A scene in which actress Kim Pilkington shoots up crystal meth for real hinted that the fun was over. Marilyn Manson sampled a typical exchange from the film on one of his recordings, ("Thanks for killing my mom." "No problem.")

Jeff married Charlotte Caffey, guitarist of the Go-Go's, and is an enthusiastic podcaster. Steve, now a music producer, married Anna Waronker, singer of That Dog. Dee died of an aneurysm in a Hollywood movie theater in 1994.

The McDonalds clung onto their home until Steve was 16. "Our parents were afraid of the unknown." In the end, they were the last family left on their block. Practice sessions in the garage often ended up, fully-amped, on the front lawn; there was nobody left to disturb.

the end.

DEREK LYN PLASTIC

What started out in Atlanta and ended up in Orlando, Derek Lyn Plastic can be described by some people as "pure genius." It's skuzzy punk rock mixed down with the finest of synthesizers and put all together into a brilliant wall of sound. You can't find another band with this kind of excitement and intensity. In fact, you probably won't even find an imposter with even a hint of the originality that this band possesses. You can search high and you can look low. I want to guarantee you won't ever find a clone. I give you Derek Lyn Plastic. Interview with Derek by Steve Blevins.

MRR: How did you get into punk rock?

Well, I was always a huge fan of music-ever since I was a little kid that would dance in front of my mom and dad's stereo while they were playing whatever was popular and may have been played on the radio, like Michael Jackson or The Cars, until I got into the second grade I finally ventured off and found my own thing which was early Mötley Crüe. The first tape I ever bought was *Shout at the Devil*. I was one of the only kids in the whole elementary school that even gave much thought to music. There were a couple other kids but we were all friends and we would trade our tapes around with each other. Anyway, when I finally made it into middle school I decided I wanted to start playing bass. I managed to get a really small amp and a piece of shit bass that already had pieces broken off of it. I wouldn't put to much money into this new hobby in fear it would be like anything else I'd ever done and not stick with it. I found a guy who already had been playing for like five years or so to show me a song or two. We got together and he asked me what songs I wanted to learn and I told him Motley Crue *Shout at the Devil*. He laughed at me and said "he wouldn't be a part of showing me such awful music." Instead he made me a tape of the first four punk bands I recall ever hearing about, aside from the Sex Pistols. He made me a tape of The Ramones, The Cramps, The Dead Milkmen, and The Dickies. I didn't know why I had to learn their songs and I knew no one was really going to be impressed with what I was getting out of bass lessons but I was like, "fuck it, I love this fucking tape," and ever since then I've been a huge fan of punk rock music.

MRR: So punk was never really available to you until you were older?

Well, I grew up in a really really small town so it had to be at least middle school. I didn't have any older brothers or sisters and I was the oldest out of my cousins who were closer to my age. My mom was into whatever was popular and my step dad was totally 100% into country music. Not bad country music but good country, like Hank Williams and stuff that was about getting drunk. My real dad could tell you anything you want to know about

He made me a tape with The Ramones, The Cramps, The Dead Milkmen, and The Dickies. I didn't know why I had to learn their songs and I knew no one was really going to be impressed...

sports. I don't think he really gives a shit about music. So needless to say he probably wasn't secretly into starting a punk rock scene in Grayson, Kentucky.

MRR: Derek Lyn Plastic is currently based out of Orlando, Florida. How long have you been playing with the current line up?
This is hopefully the final line up, but people come and go all the time and it's always hard to say. I definitely want to say this is my favorite out of the three functioning line ups I have played with in Derek Lyn Plastic so far. It features Shawn on guitar, who also plays in a nasty punk band called the F-Pipes, and I've got Trace on drums, who also plays for Fashion! Fashion!, the Image Boys and Rad Kids. Oh, but to answer your question, we've been together a little under a year.

MRR: How long has Derek Lyn Plastic been together collectively?
We started in the winter of 2003 when I was an intern at Nickel and Dime Studios in Atlanta, Georgia. I would go and pick up lunch for whoever was recording in the studio, answer phones, make coffee, whatever I was asked to do. In return, after hours I was able to get in free recording time at a top notch studio, totally free. Anyway it was a great experience, I made a whole lot of good friends, I got to play with expensive equipment and meet engineers who understood what I was talking about when it came to weird noises and things. During that time is when I recorded the *Invisible Skin* EP. It was me doing everything from vocals, guitars, bass, keys and other weird noises and my friend Rusty Knight on drums. I loved living in Atlanta it had a whole lot of good things to offer me.

MRR: So you started out as a studio project. Do you ever plan on touring?
Definitely. Right now were trying to put together a couple weeks up the East Coast and back this winter. Also, we're currently playing shows around Florida, like four or five shows a month.

MRR: What happens at a typical show? Do you have any unusual stories or has anything really good or bad ever happened during a show?
Well, the most memorable show I can really remember was with the second line up at this bar in Gainesville, Florida. I can't remember the name of it for sure but the owner absolutely couldn't stand us. I don't think it was because he thought we were bad. It was just that things were getting out of control. All of our friends were up from Orlando and not to mention there were like six of us in the band. We had totally taken over the place. During that set our friends were breaking beer bottles, smoking pot, spitting, and just acting totally insane. It was a total blast until they asked us to stop. We refused and kept on playing, then finally they turned off the breaker to the room we were playing in and the lights went out, and the amps turned off. The only thing left was Greg playing the drum beat to whatever song we were playing. They started carrying our stuff out the doors. They literally carried me right out the front door kicking and screaming about how I wanted to carry my own shit and I didn't want our stuff to get lost which was mostly on loan at the time. So then the owner came out with my chain linked microphone stand which I had welded together for the purpose of just looking fucking cool. He took the microphone stand up over his head and slammed it down on his knee bending it until it broke. I ran after him furious and cursing every single word I ever knew. Screaming, he just had his bouncer push me down to the ground and told me the cops were arriving soon to pick up the drug addicts (referring to us). Soon after we got into the car and left for Orlando in fear of what the cops might find. I don't really understand what all the fuss was about, we we're just an out of control party band at the time. Everyone was having a good time. It didn't get ugly until they cut off the electricity to the stage. The bouncer actually bought copies of *Invisible Skin* and *Plastic Surgery*. He just had to do what the man wanted. I watched him put my EPs in his car. Kind of funny how one minute I was being carried out / removed from a bar by someone and five minutes later he was paying me money to listen to my records. We never went back to that bar.

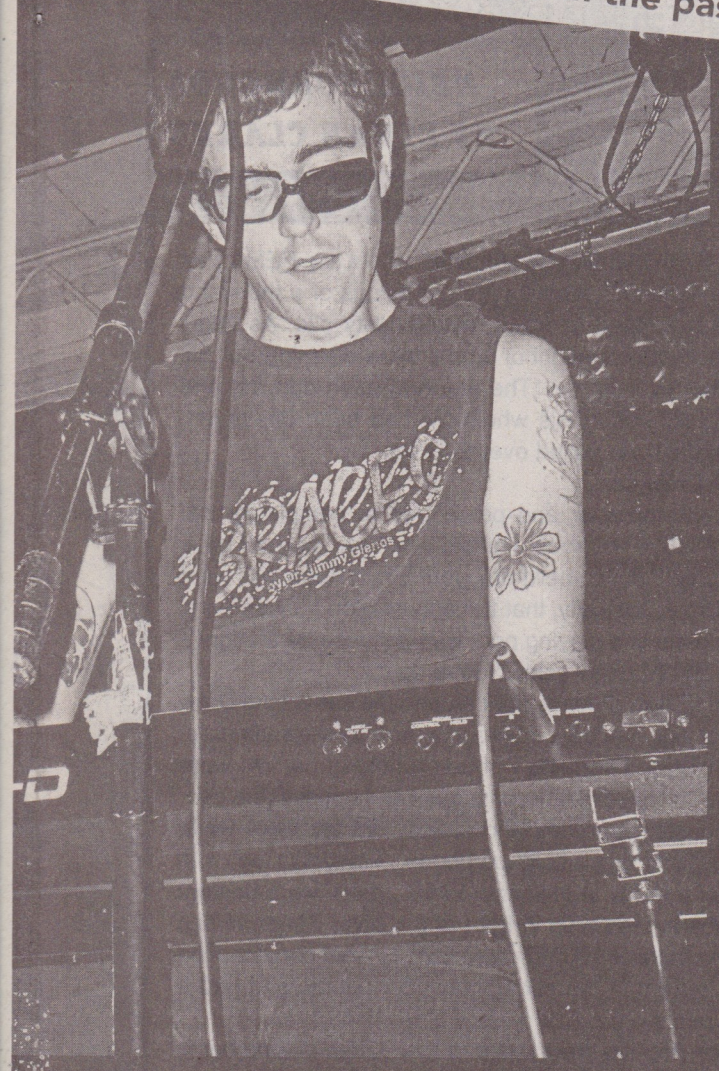
MRR: Is this standard for one of your shows?
Definitely not. A good live show is about good music and a good reaction.

I don't really understand what all the fuss was about, we we're just an out of control party band at the time. Everyone was having a good time.

When I first started fronting a band I did what probably any punk would do. I just went ape shit and tried to piss off everyone, but I found our reaction has been always a little more rewarding when we would just focus on the music and playing the music as well as we can. In earlier days, we were a total wreck, we would completely indulge in anything, everything, and would blackout before

we would even play. I'm definitely not saying it wasn't entertaining or annoying to watch but it had to be bad for the ears, and I will say I don't have any regrets on going crazy. I had a blast every single time it happened. I just grew up a little bit and want to focus on music as an artist exploring sound-

I'm a punk because I got good taste in music. I'm not a punk so I can sound like every modern garage punk band that's came out in the past decade or so...



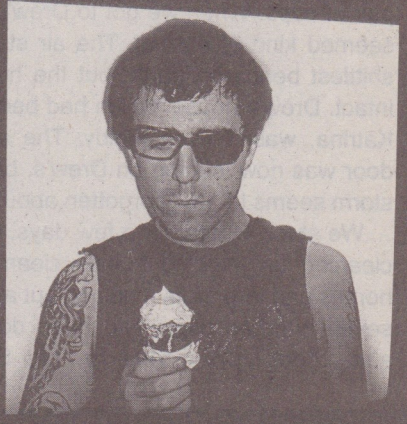
scapes and such: finding new sounds, experimenting with weird instruments other than just your standard guitar, bass, and drums, but keeping the true aggression of punk rock music.

MRR: The *Methamphetamines* EP is your latest release out of three EPs. How is this one in comparison to the previous two?

Well originally when I put out the *Invisible Skin* EP it was only intended to be like it was, released as a 7" EP packed full with as many songs as I could fit on a 7". It spins at 33 so I could put an extra song on each side and charge the standard amount of any other three or four song 45. I thought I was onto something. More bang for your buck. In theory, it sounds good. In practice, we got a lot of reviews for being a hardcore band probably because they counted the songs on the 7" wrote a generic review and never really listened to it very closely or even at all. I mean we are pretty much mid-tempo punk rock. I would scream here and there but never once did a hardcore song. I mean we maybe hardcore in comparison to MC Hammer or Vanilla Ice, but I was always under the impression hardcore generally is pretty fucking fast. I don't really get it I probably never will. People only want to say what they think is safe. No one wants to look stupid and a record reviewer sure as hell won't take a chance unless if the peers are for sure going to follow along. It kind of makes me sad for some of them. *Plastic Surgery* was intended to be a full length LP. I had all the songs written and all the artwork together, but just couldn't get all the funds together to get it recorded and ready to release. The name of the LP was originally supposed to be *The Insides and Outsides of Plastic Surgery* and it was going to be the songs from *Plastic Surgery* and the songs from *Methamphetamines* combined to be our first full length release. Therefore, I can't really compare the two totally as being separate because they were all written and recorded within pretty much the same time period. I will say that *Plastic Surgery* musically is more based on organs and synth along with a wall of guitar, bass, and drums and *Methamphetamines* is pretty much that same formula, but I hired a rocking ass old guy named Dennis Bram to play the saxophone on this song called "Walk the Dead." He put down a four part sax harmony and a sweet fucking sax solo in the middle of the song along with a Stooges style keyboard note riding throughout the song that I added in later. It's what I want to call "creep-glam." A small take on the sub-genre I supposedly created with *Plastic Surgery* called "creep-wave." I fucking love that! I feel like such a pioneer!

MRR: Where do you see the future of Derek Lyn Plastic?

The only thing I want to promise with our records is that I always want the buyer to get their money's worth and keep them listening and never bored and never be redundant. I don't want to write the same song frontwards, backwards, sideways, or upside down as I wrote before. Lots of bands do it and a lot of bands can get away with it. Sometimes that works and that's fine. That's just not Derek Lyn Plastic though. I want to try and do something different than that with this band. I get a lot of shit from the garage rock scene because I don't record my shit in a garage and get lucky enough to make it sound cool and hide my song. I'm a punk because I got good taste in music. I'm not a punk so I can sound like every modern garage punk band that's came out in the past decade or so. Some of those bands are cool. Some of them are just playing it safe. That's constantly going to be a problem in music. That's just not Derek Lyn Plastic though. We aren't even a garage band. We're a punk band dedicated to setting our records aside from everything else that is out. I want my own type of sound. I don't want to share that with anyone else. Of course I'm going to use the same things they do. It all comes with rock 'n' roll. I play guitar. I play bass. I play a synthesizer and I sing. I don't give a fuck what you think. Period.



new orleans stories. part three.

This is the third installment in a series of writing by New Orleans punks about living in their city after the devestation of Hurricane Katrina. By the time this issue reaches your hands, the year anniversary of the Hurricane will have come and gone. The last year has been a painful one for the world; this writing is a reminder of both the loss and the hope of life in the aftermath of tragedy. —Golnar

NEIGHBORHOODS
BY ETHAN CLARKE

I made plans to go back to New Orleans after the storm with Drew. Drew has lived in the same house for six years. He has never had a rent increase. His landlord hasn't, in all that time, even stepped through the front door. That was kind of the trade off. The landlord showed up once a month, on the porch, collected the rent, and left. In exchange, Drew never complained about anything. Sure, the water heater is now falling through the floor, the toilet hasn't worked in years and a neighborhood newspaper once included Drew's house on a list of local "Eyesores" (It was the only house on the list that wasn't abandoned or burned down). All in all, though, it's worked out pretty well for Drew. He's housed hoardes of traveling wingnuts, hosted said wingnuts' musical performances, put on the annual April Fools' Day "Meet the Residents" party and dragged home six years worth of random shit that he's found. He's carefully created piles of driftwood, toys, Schlitz memorabilia, bike parts, yellowed photos and a heap of broken recording equipment lovingly known as the "Tower of Power." And we were going to move it.

Despite the daunting nature of the task, I agreed, and we made the thirteen-or-so hour drive down to Louisiana in my truck. We pulled into the city at midnight and rolled through darkened neighborhoods with downed traffic signals, mold covered abandoned cars and heaps of garbage. The only people we passed between I-10 and Rampart Street were a pair of cops. When we got to Drew's house, though, things seemed kind of normal. The air stank like low tide at the shittiest beach on earth, but the houses were reasonably intact. Drew's house, which had been pretty fucked up pre-Katrina, wasn't even moldy. The abandoned house next door was now leaning on Drew's, but, as Drew put it, "The storm seems to have forgotten about 3036 Rampart Street."

We stuck around for a few days, packing up Drew's shit, cleaning up, helping friends clean out their waterlogged homes and tarp roofs. I helped out at the Bike Project where seven hundred bikes had been donated and were being sold cheap. Drew rode his old Schwinn around taking Polaroids. Up in Mid-City he stumbled onto a site FEMA was using as a makeshift landfill. The gatherings of a thousand lives were bulldozed into this moldy, dusty pile. As Drew snapped a photo, a neighbor who'd been cleaning out his house called over to him. The guy had been drinking and was very, very upset. His whole life had been destroyed. "Hey white boy!" He called over to Drew.

"Yeah?" Drew said.

The guy came over and proceeded to completely call Drew out. "You're not poor." He told him. "You may not have money yourself, but somewhere, your family does." He went on to tell Drew, basically, that the only reason he was living in New Orleans and playing poor was because he thought it was cool. "Yeah" Drew said, "You're right."

I moved to New Orleans right around the same time Drew did. Tons of kids had been roped into town by the same tractor beam that had somehow gotten a hold of us. We were all in love with New Orleans, with the weird houses and people, the constant parades and chaos. But we were white kids moving into black neighborhoods. "Gentrification" was the word of the day in the Ninth Ward…there were posters about it wheat-pasted up in front of the Alvar Street library, there were whole zines dedicated to it, its what conversation turned to in front of the punk show after people had had a couple of beers.

The race line, it's drawn hard in New Orleans, and being a white kid and just wishing it weren't that way doesn't make it go away. We still moved in, started paying the inflated rents, buying houses, making ourselves comfortable. Sure, it was already going that way when I'd shown up—there were hipster shows over at the Spellcaster Lodge on St.Claude, and a Ninth Ward website. Within a couple of years, though, the neighborhood would be predominantly white.

"We all contribute to gentrification," Abram says, "That's why we're obsessed with it." And he's right. But hopefully we're learning. Learning how to make real connections, learning to cause more good than harm.

new orleans stories. part three.

ANOTHER MONTH IN NEW ORLEANS
BY SHELLEY JACKSON

Here in New Orleans we are preparing for the one-year anniversary of the Hurricane Katrina and the flood that followed. To the rest of the world, August 29th is just another day. A Tuesday. Nothing special. But to me and a lot of people here, it is huge (like December 26th to the coasts of many countries in Asia). All I can do is look forward to it and hope that somehow, buy closing that time door, things will change. Not that things will physically change in the city, we are all tired of waiting for that to happen. But in my mind, perhaps holding onto the pain of the last year will just seem silly after one year. I remember once I broke up with someone I was very in love with, and a friend said, "Give it a year." Ouch. That seemed like forever. But this year has flown by, and I honestly can't wait for it to be over.

Reflecting on the last year, I realize that we have learned some valuable lessons from all of this. One, that pain and suffering, being some of the most real, base emotions, opens people up to parts of their lives that they once never recognized. Like the absolute beauty in something as simple as comfort, as stability, as contentment. We are a city of celebrators, and we celebrate to the depth of the pain we have felt. In two hundred years this city has felt some fucking pain, and man, can it celebrate too. I am finally learning to celebrate because I *feel* it, not just cause everyone around me seems to be feeling it. People are also moved to express their feelings more, to become activists, to stand up for themselves. People in this city have been forced to grow up quick, communities forced together, people forced to stand together to get their voice heard.

Last week Spike Lee gave 12,000 people tickets to see his four-hour documentary on the great flood of New Orleans. It was shown in the arena next to the Superdome (which I can only see as a giant tombstone or memorial to the suffering that was felt during that week the people there and allover the city were left to starve and die). The film was what it was, but the images, the words, watching that screen and seeing countless people who were part of my own personal scenery, people I knew, or had seen or had heard of, it solidified the need for me to stay here, that this is my home. The film didn't explain why people in this city feel like there is no other place they could possibly live. It isn't just family, or history. It is the heat, the beauty, and the shared understanding of what is like to be last in line, to be the people that get left behind, to live in the city that care forgot. Like I said last month, we might not have much here, but at least we all have each other. On this anniversary, I hope we can all cry together, laugh together and dance together, and celebrate the fact that no matter who fucks us over, leaves us for dead, tells stories about what mindless lunatics we all are, that we will lay it all aside to celebrate the fact that at least we still have each other.

The year may have been really difficult for me, and worse for others, but I honestly wouldn't trade it. Some days I still can't believe I am here. In the days after the flooding began, the media said the city may just get fenced off and left for gone (imagine what you would do if you were told that of your home). They said we might not be allowed to come home for nine months or a year, that it would take at least that long to drain the city. I remember what that felt like, to be banned from my place, the only place I feel normal. It was such an awful feeling that, anniversary or not, I am still amazed and appreciative every single day that I am here. It's been a tough year, but we're making it through…

Get in touch: Shelley Jackson, PO Box 791303, NOLA 70179.

photo: LARRY WOLFLEY

SKINNED ALIVE

photos (this page)
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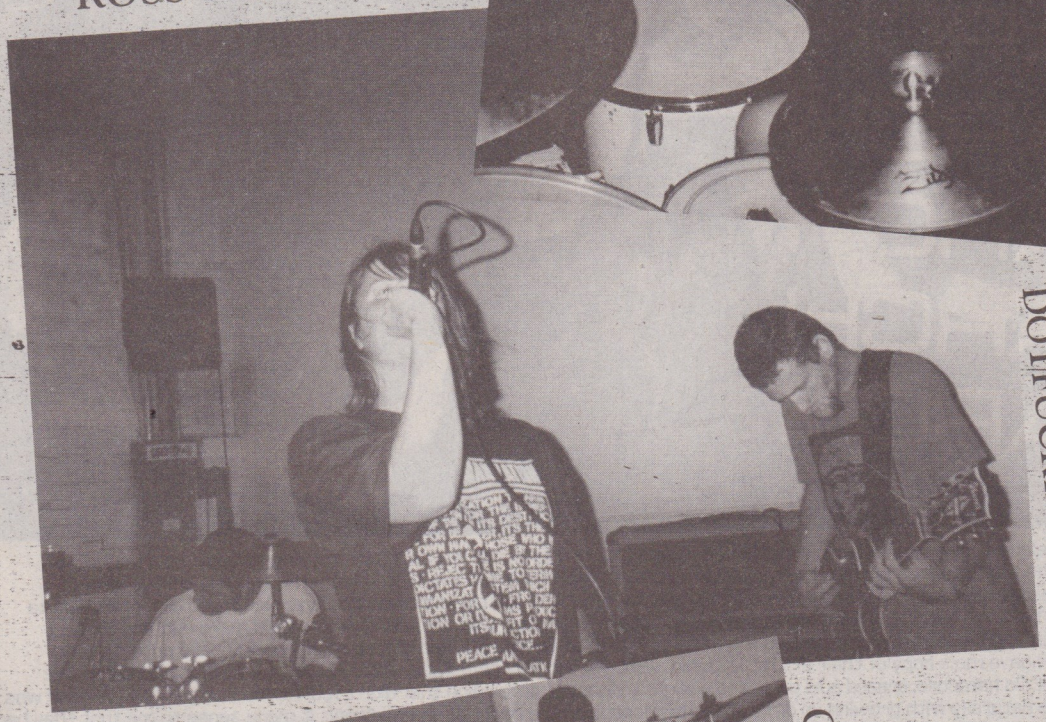

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WE MARCH

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WE MARCH

There's this guy in Cleveland; I can't remember his goddamned name for the life of me, but he takes amazing pictures—particularly of shows in his basement. One band he was super-eager to show me pictures of was this one called We March from the obscure college burg of Athens, Ohio, whom I had never heard of before. The pictures were nuts, with sweat, beer, and blood all over the lens, this weird blur of humanlike movement where the band should be, and a terrified (yet excited) looking audience. The singer was the only one you could make out, and that's because he was about six feet up in mid-air as though suspended from the ceiling, eyes bugged out and crazed as all hell. It looked entertaining enough, but then the photographer gave me a copy of their 2001 CD Life in a Bubble, and holy shit! Their sheer power made all the images make sense, with a great mix of dirty 1980s hardcore, crazed acid punk, and a slightly bluesy underpinning that didn't feel forced in any way. This band was playing soul music, stuff that came naturally with growing up dirty and unfashionable in the heart of the Midwest. It made sense to me that they had been asked to play a bunch of shows by ridiculous art-damaged motherfuckers like the Heroin Sheiks, because We March's damage is all natural and damned compelling—you can't fake this kind of stuff.

I was an instant fan, and took the initiative to email the band and make sure they contacted me the next time they were on tour so I could help them with a show in the Bay Area—all because I wanted to see them play. They have been here several times since, put out two more great albums themselves, and do not disappoint whether they are playing for two people or 200. This interview with Zach (vocals) and Curtis (Guitar) was done by a friend of the band, in Athens, during Spring 2006. We March will be on tour in late September and October, so you should really check them out if you get the chance. Interview and introduction by Johnny Geek/No Moniker

MRR: How are you guys doing?
Curtis: Pretty good. It's another day. Born to succeed.

MRR: Cool. How are you going to do that?
Curtis: By reducing my intake of sleep and increasing my intake of chemicals in place of sleep.
Zach: By smoking weed.

MRR: I always thought sleep was unnecessary.
Zach: It's necessary but overrated. There are a lot pussies out there that are like, "I need sleep!"

MRR: Are you used to not getting sleep from touring?
Zach: It's a quality that stuck with me from childhood. When you're a little kid, going to sleep sucks.
Curtis: When I was a kid, I'd start going to sleep at three in the morning (during summer vacation). The next year, when I was twelve, I'd go to sleep at four in the morning. By the time I was fourteen or fifteen, I'd go to bed at five or six in the morning. And then after I dropped out of high school, I would go to sleep when my parents left for work.

MRR: When was that?
Curtis: Five or six in the morning. One time I walked by my dad as he was coming down the stairs and he was like, "Night shift's over, eh?" (I dropped out after my sophomore year).
Zach: One time I stayed out all night. I was eighteen, so I could be out all night. It was my senior year of high school. I was walking back to my house. My mom was walking to work and I had to pass her on the street explaining why I'd been out so late.

MRR: Why is the new album coming out so late? You guys finished it over two years ago.
Curtis: It's kind of weird. I consider The Madness Ends Here a reissue. We probably put out five or six different masters of it on CD-R. It's like we haven't put out a (new) album for three years.

MRR: Why don't you guys use the "first take, best take" attitude of the early punk days?
Curtis: Well, it's not the recording, it's the mixing and sometimes overdubbing. We actually record very little. On The Madness, that's mostly first takes, but it ended up taking us a couple of years to mix it to get something brutally loud, but

WE MARCH

organic; I definitely don't like the lo-fi sound with We March, or I at least try to get the records to not sound like shit. On the record we're mixing right now, we recorded it in a couple of days. As for takes, I prefer first takes because they tend to have more energy, just looking at it clinically from a production standpoint. We're not so anal that we have to redo a song because of a mistake or two. To answer your question more fully, I couldn't give a shit about the attitude of the early days of punk, because I listen to Sabbath and Blonde Redhead in addition to punk. I will say most early punk records sound like shit because people didn't know what they were doing, and/or didn't care. I'll take Never Mind the Bollocks over Chelsea or some shitty obscure bands that people feel the need to inappropriately champion through some insecure need to be different from everybody else and automatically shit on popular things. I was like that when I was twelve and everybody loved Nirvana and the Beatles while I listened to Mudhoney, but I eventually learned to like things on their own merits. Now, I'm just obsessed with making good records because most of my favorite bands I've never even seen live, and most of them aren't "punk rock." I get so caught up in trying to make them good that I try to limit myself to an hour or two of mixing and recording at a time, or else I won't stop for days.

MRR: Why did you keep going back and mastering The Madness? Were you not happy with the final product?

Curtis: I'm obsessive-compulsive. We had the idea for the album and all the songs written and sequenced a year before we recorded it.

Zach: We had to change the lineup of the band a few times.

Curtis: We ended up recording with this sixteen-year old kid (Mullet Chad) that had been in the band for a couple months of weeks before we recorded the album. We ended up recording with his dad Bernie, because he was giving us a discount. It was a nice studio or whatever. He was one of these guys who didn't have a lot of experience recording punk rock. His mixes were a little stale. It was hard to find a common ground between loud and raw, and stale and sounding good.

Zach: We'd never worked in a studio like that before and he'd never worked with a band like us before, so we were making mistakes and learning as we went along. And that was good.

Curtis: There was something about it that we were just fixated on and some people were telling us to do something else or something new. But there was something about that album that I really liked and I kind of liked it more and more and we kept working on it and listened to it 500 times and I still like it. I still think it's a really good album and I'm getting a lot of positive feedback. We spent a lot of money on it but even if we didn't spend a lot of money on it we wouldn't want it to sound like shit. I think in the end both Life in a Bubble and The Madness Ends Here came out sounding weird and inadvertently stylized. I think they sound like how our fliers look, how they're all blown-up, distorted pictures that look kind of shitty and pixilated, but look pretty cool, kind of like our albums are distorted and saturated and broken up.

MRR: But you can still hear the fast riffage, even with all the distortion.

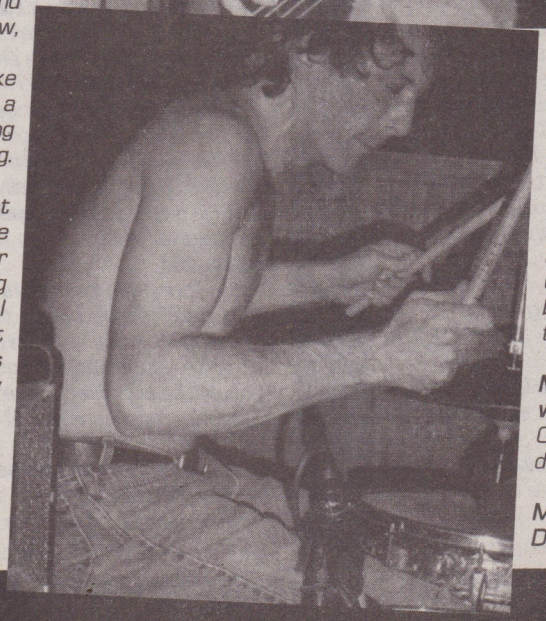
Zach: I'm kind of working on stuff now where I'm trying to make it sound less distorted. I like stuff to be loud. A lot of stuff sounds like shit these days. Maybe my hearing is going, but I think older records sound better.

MRR: Is Creator/Destroyer the new LP, or is the new EP coming out first?

Curtis: I don't know. I thought we were leaving two weeks later in October than we actually are, so I'm really going to try to get that record done.

MRR: Do you wear earplugs or anything when you play out or practice ever?

Curtis: I've been wearing toilet paper in my ears religiously for the past four years. I used to have really horrible tinnitus when I was eighteen, because I'd been playing in bands since I was thirteen, and I hardly ever used any kind of ear protection. Toilet paper really cleared up that tinnitus as far as hearing those bassy tones, because every now and then I'll get that high-end squeal that kind of comes out of nowhere and lasts for a couple of seconds. But I used to get stoned and get these two different frequencies going on in both my ears that was kind of like a low-end wah. You know, like oscillating really weird.



MRR: That's pretty fucked up.

Curtis: Yeah. When I'd be sober it'd just be waaaaaaahhh, but then I'd get stoned and they'd start oscillating at different frequencies.

MRR: Did you get off-balance? Because all your balance is in your ears.

Curtis: I don't know. I don't have too bad balance. I'm a little bit of a klutz but not too bad.

MRR: A piece of your shoe's heel fell off when you tripped in our driveway.

Curtis: I ripped off the other heel the next day because I was hobbling around.

MRR: One leg was longer than the other... Do you get some fucked up reactions from

people, going into the crowd at places that don't know you so well?
Zach: Depends on if there's a crowd there or not. Usually we get a pretty positive reaction. We'll attract some really weird people. We don't normally scare people or make them want to fight or piss them off. Sometimes you watch a front-man who's bugging you constantly and you're just out to drink. It will kind of start to piss you off or make you want to hit them. We usually don't try to do that.

MRR: It seems like a side effect of the energy.
Curtis: It's more energetic and fun [what Zach does in the audience]. Most front-men I see that go out into the audience and fuck with people seem to do it out of spite and some sort of passive aggressive intimidation toward people that aren't paying attention. We're not insecure fascists that demand people's attention like so many bands seem to these days, but Zach does get in the audience and fuck with people. It's more in the name of fun and to create a connection with the audience than ego reaffirmation. A bunch of those kind of front-men will try to fuck with me, and I just stare blankly at them, cause it's not intimidating or impressive or funny to me, because I see someone do it all the time who is actually effective at connecting to the audience rather than pushing them away.

MRR: You guys are really just a "fun-loving" band.
Zach: Pretty much.

MRR: I think The Madness Ends Here is a lot darker than Life in a Bubble. Did you get "angrier" after Life in a Bubble?
Zach: Well, there were a bunch of different things. Curtis wrote a lot of lyrics to The Madness... We weren't trying to be dark.

MRR: Maybe not darker, but more ominous.
Zach: The Jon Benet Ramsey thing ("Glorious Dead Girl") was definitely supposed to be this cryptic, fucked up song. But that was just a fucked up thing anyways, you know?
Curtis: That was kind of like an earlier song. Maybe some of those songs seem darker, more cryptic because Zach is trying to be like when he was sixteen. A song like "Chocolate," that was back when we were trying to write songs and get a reaction out of people, rather than just express ourselves. It was almost humorous, really.
Zach: They were supposed to be humorous. "Chocolate" originally was a lot slower and we used a lighter distortion, and then a little bit before Curtis joined the band, we just got stoned and played it really fast one day and were like, "Yeah, that's a lot better!" They were rudimentary originally. They were just supposed to be stupid songs.
Curtis: A little bit in the tradition of the Dead Milkmen.
Zach: Yeah yeah yeah.
Curtis: At least that's what I'd say from the outside perspective from when before I joined. And then "Glorious Dead Girl" is kind of the same thing. It was a song Zach wrote a little while ago and it was originally about twice as long and even slower, so it probably would've been like nine minutes.

MRR: That has the "NBC/ABC" (exploiting the death of Jon Benet Ramsey) part, right?
Curtis: Yeah, a little bit of a shock-value/humor thing, rather than trying to be dark and angry about it. I guess over the years it's turned into that. I was a bit more serious about music, and I think I made Zach a little more serious about music, but I'm not like super serious about music. I still have a sense of humor about stuff. Uh, I'm just trying to analyze why you'd think one album is darker than the other.

MRR: As far as lyrically, it sounds like the second album is more "me against the world," whereas the first album is "us against the world." And I think the second album, some of the riffs are more, I don't want to say darker or metallic, but more ominous. Like the middle section of "Write Me Off."
Curtis: A lot of that stuff is pretty old. "Rock 'n' Roll Seizure" I wrote when I was like sixteen and probably finished when I was sixteen. "Write Me Off" was a totally different song; I just took that (middle part that I wrote a long time ago) and put it in the song because it seemed to fit really well.

MRR: Is all the new stuff recorded with Brandon and Neil?
Zach: Yeah. Well, the Creator/Destroyer stuff.

MRR: When you guys write songs, is it like you bring in a riff and you all work on it, or do you have it all together?
Curtis: I pretty much bring in everything, even Zach's songs, because...

MRR: Because you play guitar on them?
Curtis: Well, every couple of months, I have to be like, "Zach, you got a song?" and Zach will have either a pretty-much-finished song or some riffs that I will add more riffs to. I'll pretty much arrange it, and then have him come up with lyrics for it. "Pushin' My Luck" was a song of his that I arranged. The end part of the song, where it's really big, he only had that in the song once after the first chorus or wherever it is. And I was like, "That part's really good. It needs to be in there more!"
Zach: He's always been really good with structure, and he's a way better guitarist than me, so his interpretation is the way I want it to sound: good.
Curtis: I bring in a lot of riffs and we'll jam on a lot of stuff, but we don't really make songs out of them until I finish an arrangement. Those guys—I don't want to sound like I'm bitching—there are a lot of times I'll bring in unfinished songs, and I'm like, "What do you guys think? Should it be like this? Should it be like that?" and it's pretty much just silence: [in monotone voice] "I dunno, it sounds pretty good, I guess."

MRR: That's positive feedback.
Zach: Before Curtis joined, it was me trying to get two other people enthusiastic about a song while they would bitch about their girlfriends. We had a lot of long songs that just sat around because we'd

just get high and play them. They worked well enough, so we just did them. It filled up half of a set at a live show.
Curtis: I rarely let songs die completely. I'll put songs on incubation for months or years until I figure out how they work.

MRR: Like babies?
Curtis: Yeah. They'll probably all see the light of day, especially since we have our own recording equipment now. We have a lot of ideas, and we kind of over-extend ourselves, and we're also into—not that we're lazy—but we enjoy our leisure time. We fuck around a lot. We just don't like to stress out about stuff.
Zach: And a lot of times, we were focusing a lot of energy on how the band's line-up was going to be.
Curtis: We had a lot of line-up changes, not that I want to blame it on that.
Zach: You start to burn a lot of energy on that, and we had other things. We were trying to get out on the road more, because we were mainly just playing Athens and Columbus, or little things here and there twice a year, and we wanted to start taking it a lot more seriously. So that kind of distracted us, and also there weren't people in our face all the time saying, "You need to record some shit!" you know? We didn't motivate ourselves enough.
Curtis: There's never really been anyone to help us, other than Zach and myself. There has never really been anyone who's done us a whole lot of favors. It's not like there's a label helping us put out our shit, or an experienced producer helping us put out good records.

MRR: If a label offered you anything, would you stay with your own, Non-Prophet?
Curtis: We like to do our own label, but if there was a label that I knew of that actually helped its bands and sold us our own CDs at a decent rate...There's been like one or two lame offers. There haven't been any good opportunities. We don't really like labels very much, major or indie. We like to be our own bosses. There was this one guy who wanted to put out a record with us once, and at first he was real cool, but as time went on he became more controlling, and this guy wasn't even a big-enough label to be in the position to make so many demands, wasn't ever even in a band or anything. And I was eventually like, "Oh, he's just infatuated with the idea of being a record mogul/player of some sort, instead of being someone who wants to help bands put out what they want to put out. The guy just had no idea what he was talking about, but wanted to take all the credit for being the "mastermind" behind the whole thing. The record just never happened, and the dude's label has only put out like two or three records in the three or four years since then, and they all are lame. So, we tend to stay away from labels, and they seem to stay away from us. If anyone wants to put something out though, we're always open to offers.

MRR: Is the reason you guys stick around Athens because you want to be "hometown heroes"?
Curtis: Good location, really. We can hit Chicago as easily as NYC. Sometimes Zach and I would like to move, but we'd have to get a new rhythm section...again. It's taken us a long time to get any respect locally, so we respect it, but at the same time it doesn't mean a whole lot to us—we're used to having people not give a rat's ass about us, because we're "punk rock" and immediately get written off as being moronic. But that never bothered us too much either, because we exist in a bubble. On tour we realize that we pretty much are wherever we are. We're too stoned and drunk to pay much attention to our surroundings.

MRR: Did you guys ever think about even moving to a bigger town in Ohio, like Columbus or Cleveland?
Zach: Sometimes I wonder if that's one of the reasons that we're not so well known, if it's because we've decided to stay in Athens, but I don't know.
Curtis: I mean, we've been on the road a lot in the past couple years, and we've played to lots of different audiences. Maybe a lot of people know about us, but we've never played for the same audience twice, so it's like all these people across the nation are into We March, but they don't realize that other people might be, too. I mean, it's a small cult following for sure, but it's a kind of cult following where I don't think people realize other people in the same town are into it. It's different cliques. In bigger towns, the cliques are more divided. We've played the same towns different years and played to completely different people that wouldn't know the people that came to the show six months before. We haven't really built anything; it's been all spread out. MySpace! Maybe we'll be the next Fallout Boy! We don't really wanna be like that, but man, we need to get famous so we can make some fucking money to pay off Zach's credit cards from touring. Also, I want a swimming pool.

MRR: Curtis, I hear you have a propensity for masturbating in bathroom sinks at gas stations/rest stops. What's that all about?
Curtis: I think the bumpiness of the van makes me really extra-horny, so yes, it's all true. I don't know about the other guys; they're not quite as open about that stuff as I am. I also jerk off in libraries.
Zach: I think some dude's puking off the second floor.

MRR: Really? No way. It's only 9:50.
Zach: I've puked before 9:00 before.

MRR: Now how are we going to end this?
Zach: All you people, buy the records! Believe the hype! Yo, suck it!

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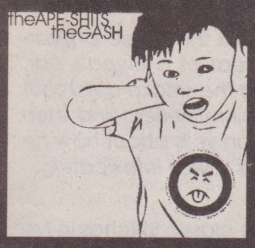

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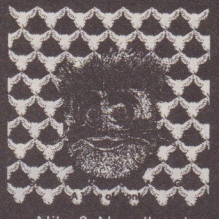

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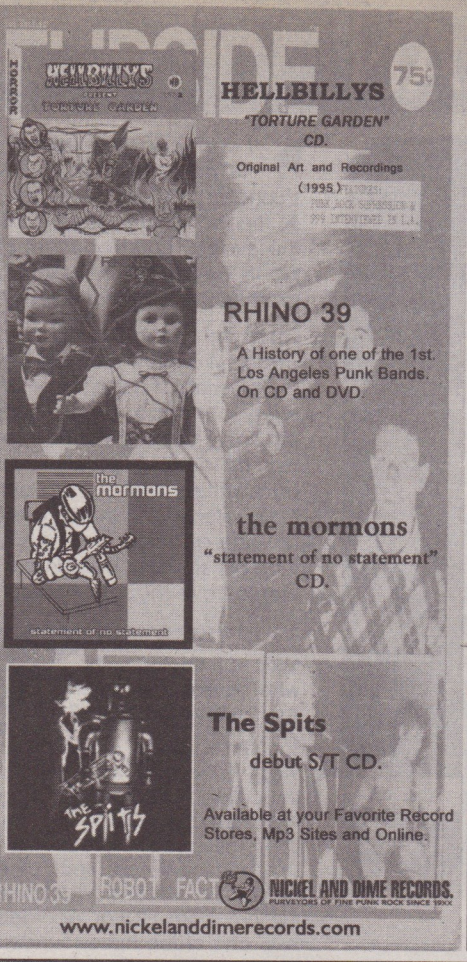

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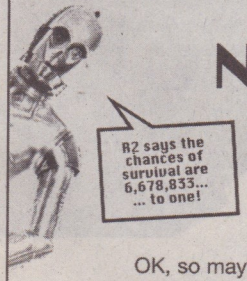

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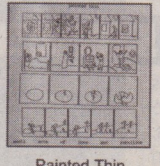

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ALAN MILMAN

Alan at 14

I can recall the exact moment when I first heard the music of Alan Milman: riding down the freeway in the backseat of a friend's car, staring at the ruins of the fine city of Detroit, watching the smoke belch out of the incinerator, seeing the flashing lights of the oil refineries, and then these loopy notes pour out of the speakers and a man yells about how he wants me dead. The excitement and immediacy of it was intoxicating. I searched and searched for the originals with no luck.

Later, my crummy band decided to do a take of the classic Stitches in My Head/I Wanna Kill Somebody *EP. I didn't feel right about releasing it without the blessing of at least one of the creators. I hunted for contact information every roundabout way possible until one night, after a few drinks and at the prodding of my girlfriend, I took one last stab at the most obvious place to start (I thought I had to get out my secret decoder and send smoke signals) and within minutes I am on the phone with Alan Milman, an interesting character with a million great stories to tell. Imagine my shock to have his blessing and find that he's got a new band, The Milman Brignall Enigma, who are still 100% punk in spirit but expand the music far beyond where you would have thought it could go. Interview by Gabby.*

MRR: Take us from the very musical beginning. Was there anything recorded or released before Alan Milman Sect?

When I was a kid I saved up money from delivering newspapers and bought a stereo reel-to-reel tape recorder and was able to overdub at a very young age. I'm not sure if it's the first song I wrote, but the first song I recorded with my friend Ricky Silverman was called "My Woman," a Gloria-type song, which I recorded in stereo with Ricky on one track and me on the other. For the guitar recording, I placed a microphone in the hole of the guitar until I could control the feedback and the result was just voice and distorted guitar—I might release it on a box set. I'll discuss that later in the interview.

Subsequently, we had a few loose aggregations that weren't really formal bands that would play fraternity parties and any place that would have us, with different combinations of personnel, and continued writing and recording with my late friend Jonathan Herbert, who was a piano prodigy. Unfortunately, these tapes seem to be missing. The songs that stick out would be "The Clown Won't Be the Different One, It's You," and "While Wilfred Weeps for Waldo"—these were written in collaboration with Ricky Silverman and everyone improvised their parts. This evolved into an avant pre-punk band called Fornt Snapson Stung Doxen Ggnorah Band, which will be referred to henceforth as Fornt Snapson. The Fornt Snapson sessions were recorded at two locations on two separate reels of tape, only one of which is known to exist today. One was at Ace Studios (Steve Unger's house); the other at the infamous Milman basement. These were subsequently given to Captain Beefheart as possible demos, with him producing us in mind. Eddie Berman, the drummer, approached Beefheart in Philadelphia with this proposition and handed him the tapes. Shortly thereafter, we had a meeting with him on 14th Street, behind the Academy of Music, at which time he told us he loved our stuff, but declined our production offer because he did not produce records.

MRR: Chronologically what came out when? Any overlap of players?

The first record I made that was released was made in collaboration with Doug Khazzam, the guitarist and my songwriting collaborator from The Alan Milman Sect. The *Stitches in My Head/I Wanna Kill Somebody* EP was recorded with one of the three founders of Atlantic Records, one being Herb Abramson (who also produced Ray Charles, he was conveniently written out of the *Ray* movie). The personnel on the first EP was myself on lead vocals, Doug Khazzam on guitar and bass, and an excellent drummer named Dominic, whose last name I can't remember for the life of me.

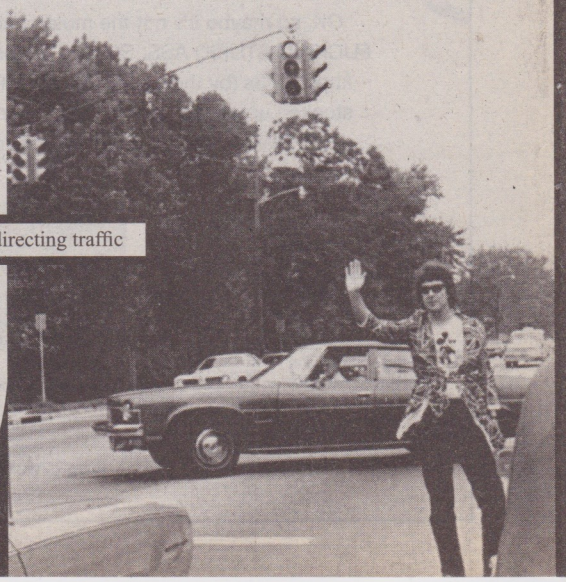
This was followed by our *Happy World/Spankathon* EP, after Herb Abramson moved his studio to the Beacon Hotel. Incidentally, these were both engineered by the excellent James Nichols. The personnel on the second EP was myself on lead vocals, Doug Khazzam on guitar, Billy Goldman on bass, and Robbie Wise on drums, joined by Steve Unger on mini-Korg and piano. Doug and I were always on the records in this period. Some of the other personnel changed here and there, although the *Happy World* line-up was a stable band for a while. The demos that we did prior to this, which have been released on CD and vinyl, and our live tracks contain some other individuals who are listed on the releases themselves.

MRR: You've gone thru a lot of musical phases. Is it a deliberate thing or is it just whatever's moving you at the moment?

In a manner of speaking, it is because I was exposed to many different musical genres as a kid. I attended a school called Green Chimneys in Brewster, New York and one of my classmates was Thelonious Monk's daughter Barbara. She took her entire fifth grade class to see her dad perform in Danbury, Connecticut. I was also exposed to folk music and bluegrass, and paid much attention to what was on the radio at the time, around the time of The Beatles and The Stones.

This was juxtaposed with singing a lot of folk music, Woody Guthrie, Dylan, Leadbelly, etc. in what were called "hootenannies" at the time. Anyway, it was quite an education. Therefore, I have concluded that most forms of music are valid. The real important characteristic is that it has real passion—style and technique don't hurt either.

All this led me to experiment with a pretty large palate.



directing traffic

MRR: Through these phases did you have any contemporaries? Were the bands more studio oriented? Any memorable gigs?

I actually started playing around with what they developed a name for later, punk. After it became contemporaneous, there were people around that acknowledged that we'd been doing some kind of precursor to this for quite a while. We just hadn't made a record yet. This was going back to '73. By that time, I had already seen The Stooges live many times, and The MC5 a few times, which I found very powerful and completely different than what else was going on at the time. There were some live gigs with Dead Boys, Cramps, and Squeeze, but since we wanted to get a certain sound with just basically the two of us and periods where we changed other musicians like our underwear, the studio was a necessity. And then we started to play it as another instrument of torture to facilitate the horrible deranged visions that lived in our minds.

MRR: You mentioned that there is an unreleased album done with Buck Dharma (of Blue Oyster Cult). How'd you hook up with him? How were the sessions?

Our guitarist, Doug Khazzam, and two guys who became our manager and road manager, Joel and Neil, had a club called The Purple Gang. They somehow ingratiated themselves with Jon Lord of Deep Purple. He generously agreed to fly them in and out of East Coast cities, providing them with concert tickets and backstage passes. They also did the same shtick with Blue Oyster Cult, sans the airfare. Subsequently, Don Roeser aka Buck Dharma was told by Doug that we were recording an album called *Man-Ka-Zam Goes Surfin'* and kindly offered to produce it. He was a great guy to work with and knew his way around the studio. Unfortunately, we didn't finish a bunch of the vocal tracks. Some of the completed ones are on the Alan Milman Sect/Man-Ka-Zam *Stitches* release (still available from Munster on vinyl), and we're trying to find the multi-tracks now. This may be completed some time in the future, if we are successful. We only ask our readers to pray for its recovery at this time.

(By the way, our narrator, Rob Gardiner, is asking me these questions at home that were emailed to me by Tony, and magnanimously consented to be tortured by my vile moods. Thank you, Mr. Crispy.)

MRR: Now on the *Sect* EP there are vocals attributed to a Larry Teich. Who is this guy?

My father's stockbroker's secretary's son, which is also a Roger Miller song.

MRR: Now another burning question, having made plenty of music, is it somewhat aggravating to be primarily remembered for a band you did so long ago? Do you feel boxed in or like the expectation is for another "Stitches in My Head?"

Yes and no. It's fantastic to be known by a large amount of people without making commercial music. I know that everybody always deludes themselves into thinking that their newest work is their best work. That can't be determined until something has had a chance to stand the test of time. Without reservation, and somewhat objectively, I believe our current album, Milman-Brignall Enigma's *Bafflemania* (available through www.lightintheattic.com then click "Florence Records"), will surprise many people. We constantly try to surprise ourselves. It's getting airplay on KEXP in Seattle regularly, and it will soon be exported to Japan. I always find the past, present, and future blurring together, and it's all just as valid.

I'm also about to embark on the recording of a solo album which will consist of crooning backed by an orchestra of mellotrons, which is going to be called Al Milman – *Mellotronica*.

MRR: Running down the list here, you went from Man-Ka-Zam to Buddy Love and then Duck and the Ponds. The last two being somewhat mystery bands to most people including myself. What's the story with these bands?

We actually went from The Alan Milman Sect to Man-Ka-Zam. Man-Ka-Zam is an acronym of the suffix from my name, Milman, and an abbreviation of Doug's name, Khazzam. This initial band was obviously the two of us. This was transformed into a vehicle for our writing and production with myself as the lead singer, and Doug as the guitarist. The detour into the Buddy Love period was a transition from punk to power pop, initially with a new lead singer, Joey Kelly, who eventually departed, and then Doug as the lead singer. I assumed more of a background role, doing production, creating the music and image, and doing some vocals on the Buddy Love album. Prior to the album, the stand-alone single of *Sheila* went into medium rotation on the biggest rock station in New York, WNEW, for a year, and was a radio hit, but was only released in promotional form due to circumstances beyond our control. By the time the LP was made, Joey was gone and Doug took over the lead vocals. The other members of Buddy Love were some of the same people that we worked

Al & Rodney

Alan Milman and Doug Khazzam

with previously in Man-Ka-Zam, including drummer Robbie Wise, and bassist Brett Rizzo (who didn't appear on the earlier records, but did play on the Buddy Love album). This period was essentially the end of my musical association with Doug.

The next band was actually called The Mod Shades, but released in England at the eleventh hour with the somewhat dada-esque name Duck and the Pond. My new partner in crime was my songwriting partner Jeff Pollack, who was also the guitarist, and on the *Big Beat*/Ace album, released in England, Lane Steinberg handled bass and drums.

After I moved to Seattle, I formed the current group, Milman-Brignall Enigma, with Matt Brignall, who plays a multitude of instruments, including sitar, guitar, banjo, steel guitar, etc. We currently have a new album recently released called *Bafflemania*, which has been receiving airplay in Seattle and California, and getting good reviews.

MRR: Based on what I can gather you moved from NY to Seattle at some point. When did this happen? What was the idea behind this cross-country move?

I originally moved here to Seattle in 1991 to open a record store called Bedazzled Discs with my friend Moshe Weinberg, who had been living in New York, where we met. He moved back to Seattle shortly before I relocated there, where we owned and operated a very interesting record store for twelve years, which unfortunately closed in 2003. We miss it very much.

MRR: Talk a bit about that. What led to you closing up shop?

We had a huge selection of non-commercial punk, not the trendy shit, the largest sections of Johnny Thunders, T Rex, and Johnny Cash, probably anywhere in the world. At one point, we probably sold more Small Faces CDs than stores in England, approximately 300-400 copies of *Darlings of Wapping Wharf Launderette*. We also had a huge garage/psychedelic section, everything in print by Serge Gainsbourg and Scott Walker, and much other esoteria, and an extensive collection of many independent labels, including at one time the entire 4AD catalog. Bedazzled had a cult following, which included principal members from many Seattle bands.

The main reason why we closed was because a renovation of the University District neighborhood, where our last location was, caused a decline of our business, which did irreparable harm.

MRR: So how did the new band come about?

Milman-Brignall Enigma started as a songwriting collaboration with Matt Brignall, whom I met in our store as a customer. Initially, we casually started writing songs, which evolved into acoustic recording sessions at Private Radio with Jack Endino, one of which is included on *Bafflemania* in its naked form, just to demonstrate contrast, since everything else on the album is very elaborately produced.

MRR: You recorded with Jack Endino and it looks like he played on the recording. How did that work out? Is he a permanent fixture in the band?

We would hate to work without him. He's one of the finest bass players I've ever heard. He has the ability to sound melodic and heavy as fuck simultaneously. He actually reminds me of Roy Wood, although he's never heard him. His arranging skills are devastatingly good, and he can facilitate any production idea thrown his way.

MRR: For those that haven't heard it, why don't you give some input as to your sound.

I would say "raga-billy," Ravi Shankar meets Johnny Cash. Ha ha ha. It's actually much more than that. That's just the central concept. It also involves tongue-in-cheek over-amped guitar and feedback, Appalachian folk influences, tone generator, a dash of modern jazz, a bit of Bakersfield country, steel guitar *ala* Eno, and my arsenal of vocal inflections.

MRR: Are you planning on playing out or touring?

Maybe. A lot of it depends on the availability of people. Jack Endino, Dan Israel, our drummer who has a very exhausting night job, and David Will, our keyboardist, who handles two residential apartment buildings, and of course Matt is a doctor involved in medical research. So a lot of it depends on how much time and energy they can devote to the live side of it. But it's something we're seriously considering on a limited basis.

MRR: The recording is pretty intricate on the new album. How long did the process take? I'm assuming this was a lengthy series of sessions?

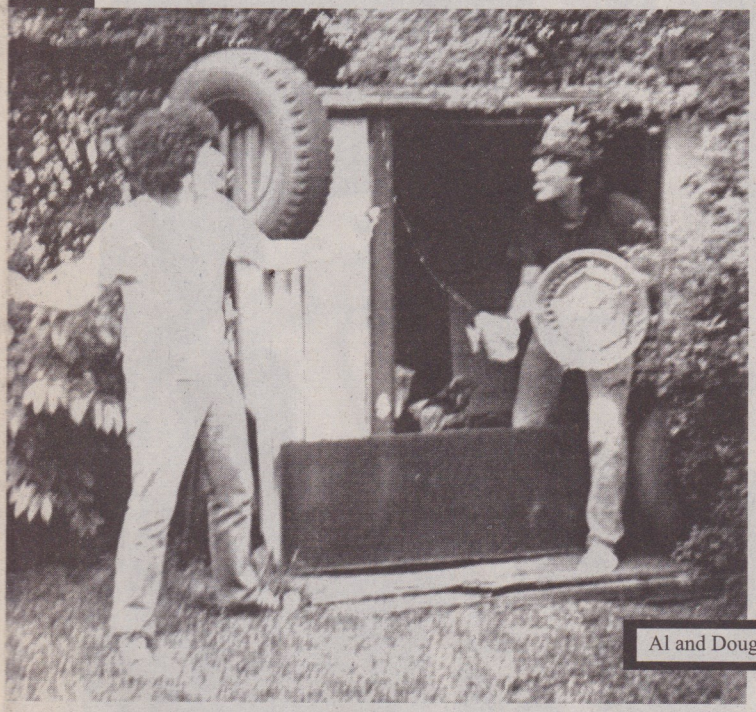
We started recording sometime after 2001 and did many marathon sessions with extremely elaborate production work. A couple years into the sessions, I moved back to New York to work at Psychedelic Solution between 2003 and 2004, and then commuted back to Seattle every three or four months to record for whole weekends. In 2004, I returned to Seattle, where I will probably remain for the rest of my days, because New York is really a drag now. Between 2004 and 2005, we finally completed the album, and then spent quite a bit of time mixing and mastering it, until we got it right, but we are very satisfied with the results. It was worth the considerable amount of time it took to complete it.

Milman-Brignal

What really makes this album special is our beloved narrator, Robert Leon Gardiner, who recurs throughout, imparting the spoken vignettes between the tunes. All in all, what we attempted here was something in the tradition of Odgen's Nut Gone Flake, Bonzo Dog Band, Mothers, Velvets, and albums that have a continuity and substance that is sorely missing in subsequent music. This approach is intended to be listened to as a whole album. People have a tendency to chop things up now and not really get the whole picture. There are some people, like The Flaming Lips, which accomplish a more cohesive goal. Of course, we approached this rather satirically, threw in everything except the kitchen sink, and it resulted in a satire of overproduction.

MRR: It's interesting how wide your view of punk is. How do you feel The Milman-Brignall Enigma fits into the ever shrinking cloister that is punk rock?

The pervasive thread that runs from my original punk records and the present day is the energy and aggression. You could say I'm an angry old man, working with people of all ages. Punk should be perceived in the spirit of individuality. If everybody copies what's out there, it defeats the whole purpose. It's about DIY and creating your own sound forcefully, with a lot of aggression and energy. You could say the early Who was a tremendous inspiration, with their anarchic and auto-destructive performances, and probably the first example of punk rock.



Al and Doug

MRR: How do you feel starting out with this project which is different from your previous projects? Any stress over finding a niche? Or just taking it as it comes.

That sounds like the Passover question, "Why is this night different than all other nights?" Because doing this project, we lean in many directions. It's basically about being eclectic, and not putting any fences around our music, or music in general. We are not creating a product; we are just creating. If people react to it, or derive anything from it, that is strictly their prerogative. We do this for ourselves and people that are like-minded. If it becomes popular, it's strictly a coincidence. In fact, we are basically satirizing the whole process. We're not interested in finding a niche. We're interested in a niche finding us, or many niches finding us. As far as "taking it as it comes," that's what the Maharishi does, which is an interesting philosophy, but we really don't think of it that way. It's a culmination of various styles, and niche identification is limiting. I see no limits. People should interpret things for themselves, not have it done for them. We are not trying to brainwash everybody; we are rebelling against brainwashing. We hope you are all able to attend the funeral of dogma.

MRR: Now it's obvious that you still have a level of humor to what you do. How important is humor to music in your eyes?

Very important, essential. Integral to the process. It is ingrained in the work. I don't trust people that don't have a sense of humor. Of course, humor doesn't have to be the "ha-ha" "hee-hee" variety. In fact, I detest incoherent giggling in general. Humor can be dark, hidden, dry, subtle, and of course satirical. In other words it should be making a point, but we must be able to be self deprecating, and not take the world or ourselves too seriously.

MRR: How is distribution going? How do distributors or interested fans get in touch to carry or buy the recording?

We are distributed by Light in the Attic Records here in Seattle, Washington. Purchase inquiries for other distributors, retailers, or fans can be directed to josh@lightintheattic.com. Anyone can also email me directly at almilman@hotmail.com. Individuals who wish to purchase a copy can go to lightintheattic.com and click on "Florence Records."

MRR: Any final comments?

I hope we passed the audition.

DISCOGRAPHY:

ALAN MILMAN SECT EP (Britz) 1977

MAN-KA-ZAM EP (Britz) 1978

BUDDY LOVE *Buddy Love* (Davco) 1983

DUCK AND THE PONDS *Lost World* (UK Big Beat) 1988

ALAN MILMAN SECT EP (Bag Of Hammers) 1992

ALAN MILMAN SECT *Stitches* (Munster) 2002

MILMAN BRIGNALL ENIGMA *Bafflemania* (Florence) 2005

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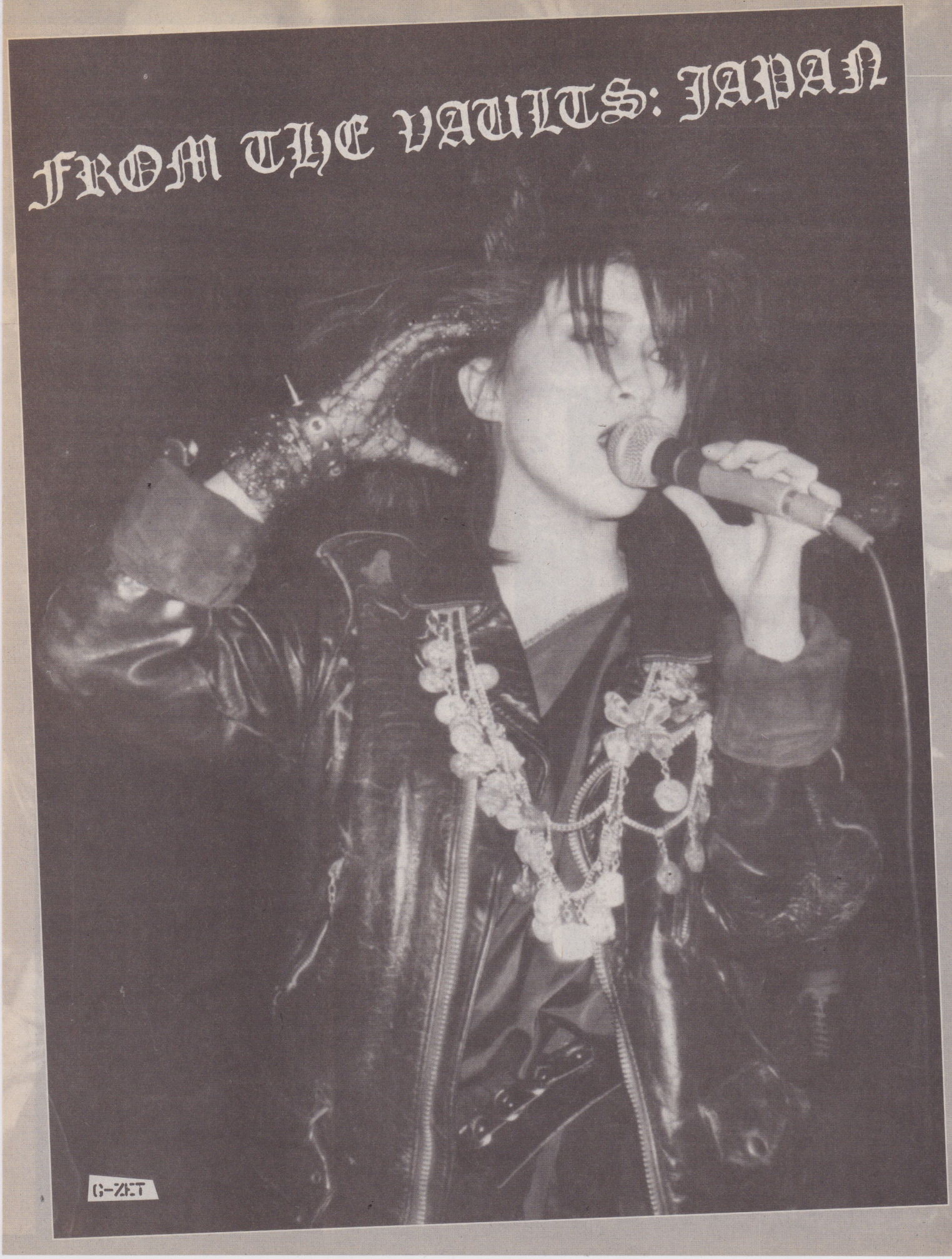

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GHOUL

RAT TRAPS

The Rat Traps from Henderson, TN released one of the best 7-inch documents of raw garage-punk intensity last year with the Tennessee RocknRoll *single. Featuring talented teen Jeffrey Novak (who also does his one-man band), they followed up with another great single on Jay Reatard and Alix Lid's Shattered label and a split with LA noiseniks The Lamps. They mainline the Oblivians' distortion-drenched delivery with hardcore song tempos and screamed-until-their throats-bleed boy/girl death metal vox on trashy anthems like "Gimme Scanners" and "New Flesh." Recently completing a tour of the USA with manic frenchoid punkers The Fatals, they survived to talk about Sparks, hot dogs, and David Cronenberg.*

Interview and introduction by Lemmy Caution

The Rat Traps are Joe (guitar and vox), April (guitar and vox), and Jeff (drums).

MRR: Does Jeffrey get confused behind the drum kit without a guitar in his hand?

Joe: Jeffrey is always confused.

Jeff: Yeah, I don't know. I'm a pretty bad drummer, but I'm not that good of a guitar player either. I never get confused, but I usually fuck up a lot with whatever instrument I'm playing.

April: I think Jeff does a great job.

MRR: The word on the street is you kids have a Sparks addiction going on. Please explain to the international readers what Sparks is and the part that it's played in your downfall.

Joe: I'll let April answer that one.

April: Yeah, I guess I'm the only one who ever drinks it. It's a pretty gross orange energy drink with 6% alcohol. It has nothing to do with my downfall though. That's cable TV's fault.

MRR: I know Jeffrey has his one-man band. What other projects have you got going on concurrently to the Rat Traps?

Jeff: I'm starting a new band where I play guitar, and my girlfriend, Jemina's, going to play bass. We've come up with a bunch of songs, but we don't have a name yet.

Joe: I play bass in Dutch Masters, and I play guitar in another band, Sons of Thunder, with Eric Oblivian, Sambeaux from Mangina, Abe from the Oscars, and Memphis legend Richard Martin.

MRR: Why do you think there's such a fertile scene in Memphis? There always seems to be a ton of amazing music from there.

Joe: It's a lot easier to be in a band in Memphis as opposed to New York or other big cities because the cost of living is below the poverty line. Plus, we're all alcoholic savants.

Jeff: It's usually the same group of a few people playing in all the bands. It's either Eric O, or Jay, or Alicja or somebody, but in the last year or so some great new bands came out of nowhere that aren't really connected to other known local bands. Bands like the Boston Chinks and the Barbaras!

April: Yeah, there seems to be a new group of younger kids starting some really great bands. I think the mixture of boredom and a lot of alcohol always makes for good rock and roll. I keep meaning to start the Pussuaders, an all-girl Persuaders cover band, with Alix Brown from Angry Angles, but we've yet to practice.

MRR: Imaginary bands are the best ones anyway. If you could have a band that wasn't restricted by the puny limits of reality, what would it be like? You can have any members, living or dead.

Jeff: I'd kill to be in some sort of Jeff Evans backing band. The Gibson Bros. are still my favorite band.

Joe: A doo wop group featuring Ross Johnson. I think he's still alive.

April: Ross Johnson rules! He should be the mayor of Memphis.

MRR: A doo wop band would be good. Would you have matching suits and Brylcreemed hair?

Joe: I think Ross would be more of a Murray's Pomade kinda guy.

MRR: What's with the David Cronenberg references? What's your fave Cronenberg movie?

Joe: Those movies warped my brain at a young age. *Videodrome* is probably my favorite.

Jeff: *Videodrome's* great, but I've been watching *Crash* a lot lately. It has the perfect mixture of sex and car crashes.

MRR: If you could make someone's head explode, who would it be and why?

Joe: Joan Rivers.

MRR: Joan Rivers' head looks like it's kind of exploded already, but stalled before the final eruption so it's just a bit bloated and weird.

April: I saw her in New York City one time on the street. She looks even freakier in person.

Jeff: I don't even have to think about it. I would love to see Sandra Bullock's head blow up! I hate her.

April: Hmmm. I can think of a few

people.

MRR: Come on, don't be coy. Dish the dirt!

April: I want them to be surprised when it happens though!

MRR: Who would you like to play your part in the Rat Traps bio-pic?

Joe: Clint Howard.

Jeff: Hillary Swank in drag. I heard that Clint Howard has already been talking to Timmy Volga's people about playing Timmy in the Clone Defects' bio-pic. Sorry Joe.

April: Lindsey Lohan.

MRR: Are you a mean girl, April?

Jeff: Yes, she is.

April: Only when I have to be.

MRR: What's the best and worst thing that's ever happened to you on tour?

April: Well, the worst was probably when the White Panther (our van) broke down in Cleveland last November when we were there for Horriblefest. The best is probably all of the great people I've gotten to meet.

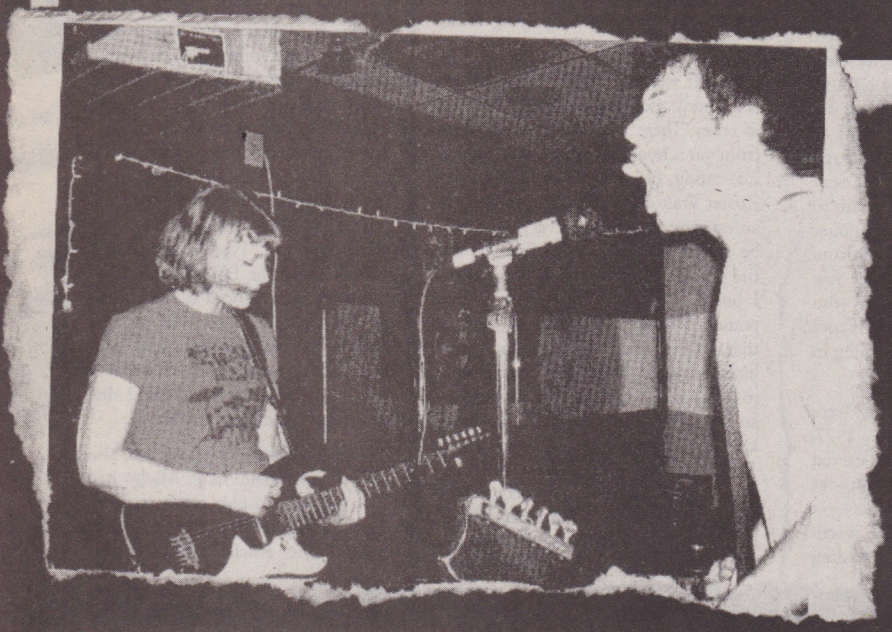
Joe: Getting our tires slashed in Orlando sucked, but Detroit was the worst.

Jeff: I'm with Joe. Hamtramick is the worst place in the world as far as I'm concerned. I'd go back to Orlando anytime. Sure, we got our tires slashed, but the people down there are fucking great!

MRR: What would you have for your death row dinner?

April: Country fried steak with gravy, baked macaroni and cheese, and peanut butter pie.

Joe: Chopped pork sandwich from Payne's.



Jeff: A Nathan's hot dog with spicy mustard, a corn beef sandwich, one pound of west Tennessee pulled pork, and a couple two-liters of Coke.

MRR: That's a lot of meat.

Jeff: So what?

April: We're Southern. We like meat.

MRR: Do you have distinct characters in the band—like one person's the organized one, one person's the wild one, etc? Or are you all well-rounded human beings?

April: Somehow I think I fit both of those roles. I'm definitely the one that keeps up with where we're going and selling the merch, but I'm also usually the one who parties the latest. Jeff makes most of our merch. Joe usually drives. We all do our part.

Joe: I'd like to think I'm the most imperfect combination of Johnny and Dee Dee.

MRR: Who would be the handiest Rat Trap in the event of a bar brawl?

April: Probably me, since maybe they wouldn't hit me back. I can't really see Jeff getting into a fight.

Jeff: I could see April totally getting her ass kicked in a fight. I'd put my money on Joe.

MRR: What do you do with your lives besides playing music?

April: Well, lately I've been working as a substitute high school teacher and a college AV librarian. I try to get out of Henderson as much as possible so I can keep my sanity.

Jeff: I dropped out of school back in December, and now I'm unemployed and broke.

Joe: I make sandwiches.

MRR: What are you good at?

April: Pretty much everything.

Joe: Disagreeing with April.

MRR: Is there ever going to be a Rat Traps full length?

Jeff: It'd be cool if we got around to recording an LP, but we just don't have that many songs. Plus, April's against it.

April: Several labels have expressed interest, but at this point I don't see it happening. I'm a fan of singles.

Joe: Never.

MRR: When are you going to come to Europe? We want the Rat Traps.

April: Probably never, but I wish we could!

Jeff: Yeah, I went to the UK with my one-man band and realized I'd rather just stick around the States.

BLOOD ROBOTS

YOU FUEL THE FIRE
The Story Of Blood Robots
By Lance Hahn

Sned has been a fixture in the underground for years. Mostly known for his hardcore groups like Generic, Pleasant Valley Children, One by One and Boxed In, not many realize that he got his start in the previous generation of peace punk groups. In 1982 he began playing in the Newcastle group Blood Robots.

Sned: "Some joke bands and fictional bands, yes, mostly the making-up-daft-songs-at-home bit; the Delicious Books had a drummer with real drums so Hec was promoted to singer but he clearly didn't want to be! We actually played one gig, bloody awful. Blood Robots from '83 to '84 was the first 'proper' band for all of us."

Along with Sned, Micky was a local punk who would become a long-time collaborator.

Micky: "I got into punk when I was thirteen, which was a fuck of a long time ago! The reason why I got into it was because I was just getting into music and I'd just been bought my first record player. I didn't have any brothers or sisters to copy, and my friends were just discovering punk as well so it wasn't as if I was copying off them either. I suppose it was what we became aware of first. So I don't have a dodgy collection of heavy metal LPs to be embarrassed by or be proud of. The first two records I ever bought were *Hong Kong Garden* by Siouxsie and the Banshees and *The Day The World Turned Dayglo* by X-Ray Spex. Pretty cool, eh? Well, it might have been cool had I managed to buy both records with a picture cover and the X-Ray Spex one in colored vinyl. When I got into punk it was pretty easy to do so as you didn't really have to look that far to find things going on. There were places to go and plenty of people to hang out with. Now there's nowhere to go in Newcastle and very few people who I actually want to hang out with. What keeps me going these days are my punk and hardcore friends in other places and the few remaining people in Newcastle who are decent (not all punks) and the cool places I have visited through being in a band."

Sned: "The older kids at school were getting into punk around 1977, checking out the band names carved into the desks, painted on backpacks (then known as 'haversacks')—it seemed interesting and worth checking out. I remember reading about the Sex Pistols in *Sounds* at scout camp that summer. Of course, punk was everywhere, what with 'God Save the Queen' at number one in the charts! The notion of pissing people off always appealed to me; not mindlessly, but with a bit of sarcasm and wit. It was pretty normal to be into punk for a while—of course most people moved on before even leaving school; freaks like ourselves kept with it. In spring of 1978, Hec and myself went to see the Buzzcocks and Penetration at Newcastle City Hall. We were 13 years old, it was awesome, and from there on we were hooked. The Ramones were my inspiration to play guitar. I already knew what was going on in the world before punk rock came along. Punk rock gave us a way to express ourselves, and in doing that it changed our lives."

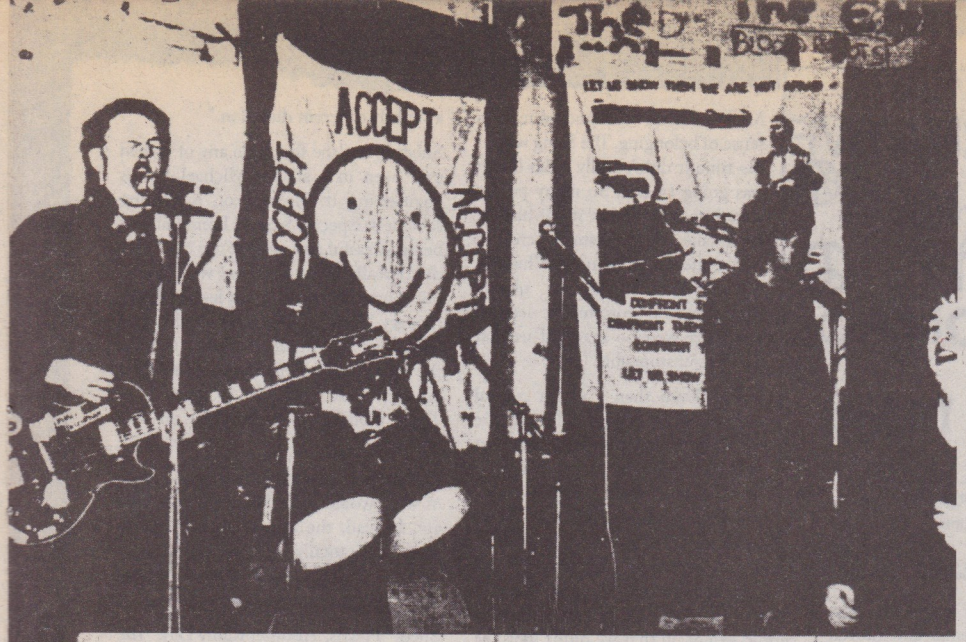
From those early days of punk, Sned knew he wanted to be more involved. It made sense that he would struggle for the next several decades playing music and getting his message out.

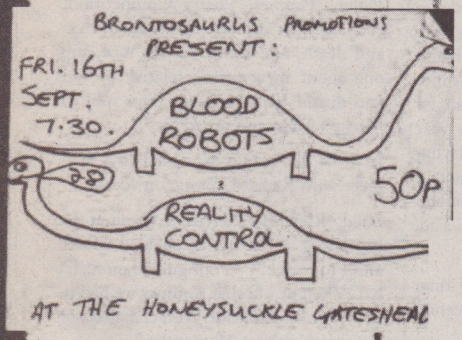
Sned: "It was just always a part of me, since punk rock and the 'anyone can do it' ethos. There were some punk bands from our school that were pretty good or interesting, like the Noisy Bricks (pre-Zoviet France) and PigSani. It was just an exciting time where everyone would be forming bands, mostly fictional but the odd one would get off the ground. I bought an awful Zenta bass for ten pounds. I couldn't play it at all, ditched that and moved on to guitar, which was a bit easier on the fingers. Hec and I would make up daft songs and record them on an old mono tape recorder. The drum kit would consist of two drumsticks, my 1977 *Spiderman* annual and a bed/chair combination. Having no equipment didn't dampen our enthusiasm; Swell Maps and The Fall were big influences for us in terms of getting a band going around 1980-81."

With Sned being able to play guitar and sing, he recruited his friend, Hec, as drummer. The two would spend the next year playing with different bassists, getting the group going.

Sned: "Hec and I were best friends through school in Heaton. We lived close by and went to the same Jesmond youth club along with 'Killer' Carr, who joined us on bass. We chose the name Blood Robots. 'Killer' had to go after two shockingly bad gigs in spring of '82, so it was back to the drawing board. We had Michael S from Reality Control standing in on bass that summer. We put a notice up in the record shop to find a replacement and this guy Simon from Morpeth answered and joined for a couple of gigs. We wanted to expand to a four-piece, so at the end of '82 we put another ad up in Listen Ear. This time there's a reply from a Micky of Hebburn. We wrote back and forth for a while and then met up at Spectro Arts (long since bulldozed and turned into a car park.) It didn't really work out with Simon though, and he went on to form a metal band called Rebel. Micky's mate, Andy (from Jarrow), had two weeks to learn the set before our first gig proper (Feb '83 at Spectro). Two school friends from north of the Tyne and two from the south, we practiced at The Station in Gateshead, which was in the middle. We were all still living with our parents, except Hec, who had a bedsit in Jesmond, long before that place became yuppie central."

Eventually, Sned met Micky, who also played guitar and sang. Micky had been wanting to play music with his friend, Andy, on bass. Soon, the four became the official Blood Robots





lineup.

Micky: "I met Sned and the rest of the band through a notice in a record shop called Listen Ear. The main thing that I remember about the notice was, apart from being hand scrawled, the 'influences' were not just run of the mill punk. Swell Maps and The Fall both got a mention and they were firm faves of mine, as well as the more obvious stuff like Crass. We all lived in and around Newcastle and it turned out that we went to and hung around in pretty much the same places—The Station, Listen Ear, Spectro Arts—but strangely didn't know each other! After a month or so it became apparent that the bass player, Simon, wasn't really as serious as we were, so we drafted in one of my school friends, Andy, on bass."

Like the others, Blood Robots would be Micky's first introduction to playing music.

Micky: "Blood Robots were my first band and the first time I'd ever actually played with other people. I did go to practice with another band once before, which involved a two-hour bus journey, and lots of sitting around waiting for someone's dad to go out to the club, and then finding that the other people couldn't be bothered."

A great lyrical band name, it was actually a tribute to another group: Free Festival regulars, the Androids of Mu.

Sned: "It's the title of an LP I have by the band Androids of Mu (on Fuck Off Records, which was a very inspiring DIY record and tape label of the time) and the name just stood out. The meaning that we attached to it is pretty self-evident, I think—humans as machines, as cogs in a system, a system that is fucked up!"

Along with the Androids of Mu and the Fuck Off Records gang (Here And Now, etc.), Crass clearly had an impact on the group and eventually Crass-related bands did as well.

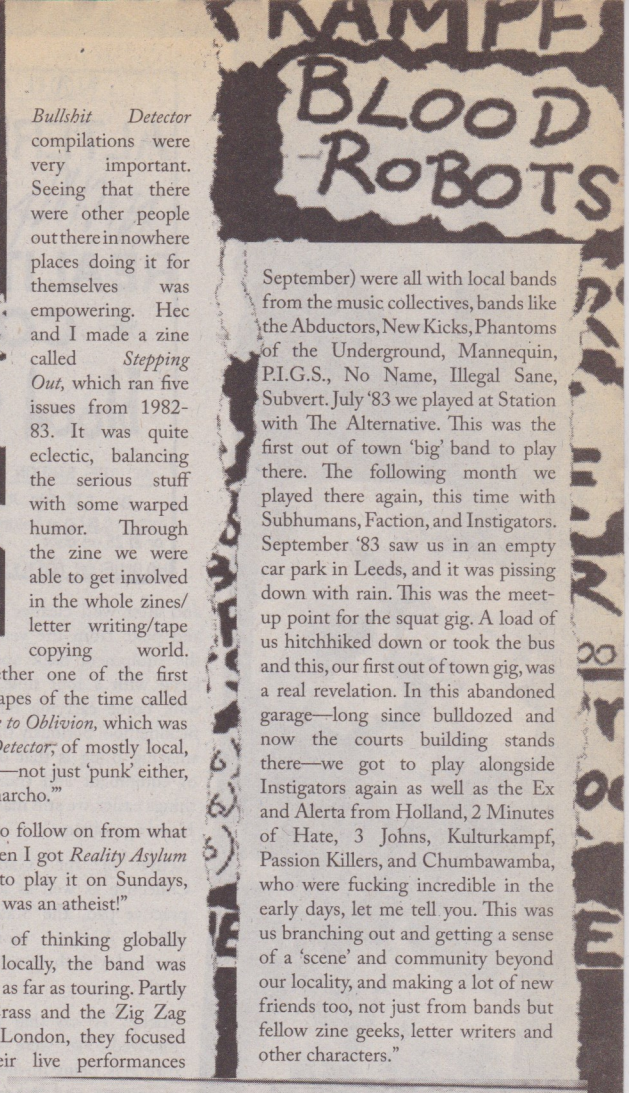
Micky: "Somewhat amusingly, my mother bought me *Stations Of The Crass* for Christmas! It was released on Christmas Eve and the following day it was on my record player. It didn't take me long after that to track down *Feeding Of The 5000*."

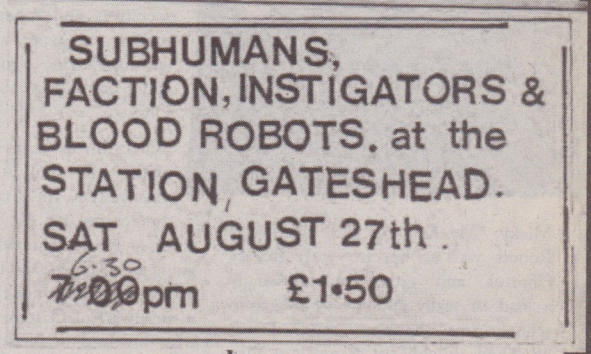
Sned: "I don't remember the term 'anarcho punk.' That came about sometime afterwards, as did 'peace punk'—but there was 'Crass punk,' mainly used as an insult by the 'real' (ha ha!) punx of the time. No one would label themselves, of course! I was an avid reader of the music papers since discovering punk from '78 onwards; I think it was because Gary Bushell had given them such a slagging off that I became intrigued. When *Reality Asylum* came out, of course it was really cheap so I bought it on spec, and that record scared the shit out of me! They were interesting, intelligent, and everything good but it wasn't until *Penis Envy* that I got really, really into them. That is still such a harsh LP! The *Bullshit Detector* compilations were very important. Seeing that there were other people out there in nowhere places doing it for themselves was empowering. Hec and I made a zine called *Stepping Out*, which ran five issues from 1982-83. It was quite eclectic, balancing the serious stuff with some warped humor. Through the zine we were able to get involved in the whole zines/letter writing/tape copying world. We put together one of the first compilation tapes of the time called *An Alternative to Oblivion*, which was our *Bullshit Detector*, of mostly local, friends' bands—not just 'punk' either, but all very 'anarcho.'"

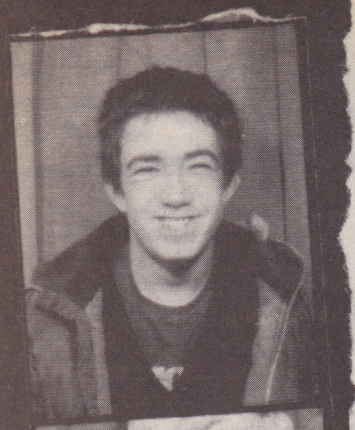
Micky: "Just to follow on from what Sned said, when I got *Reality Asylum* I was scared to play it on Sundays, even though I was an atheist!"

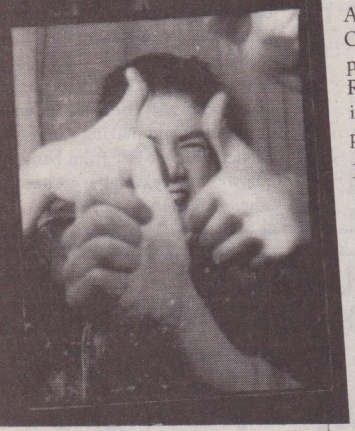
In the spirit of thinking globally while acting locally, the band was less ambitious as far as touring. Partly inspired by Crass and the Zig Zag squat gig in London, they focused most on their live performances around their hometown.

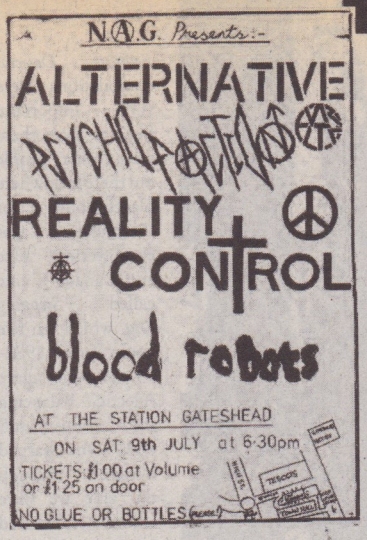
Sned: "The gigs before Feb '83 'don't count,' it says here! I think that says it all—crap! Nearly all of our gigs were with Reality Control, and (up until September) were all with local bands from the music collectives, bands like the Abductors, New Kicks, Phantoms of the Underground, Mannequin, P.I.G.S., No Name, Illegal Sane, Subvert. July '83 we played at Station with The Alternative. This was the first out of town 'big' band to play there. The following month we played there again, this time with Subhumans, Faction, and Instigators. September '83 saw us in an empty car park in Leeds, and it was pissing down with rain. This was the meet-up point for the squat gig. A load of us hitchhiked down or took the bus and this, our first out of town gig, was a real revelation. In this abandoned garage—long since bulldozed and now the courts building stands there—we got to play alongside Instigators again as well as the Ex and Alerta from Holland, 2 Minutes of Hate, 3 Johns, Kulturkampf, Passion Killers, and Chumbawamba, who were fucking incredible in the early days, let me tell you. This was us branching out and getting a sense of a 'scene' and community beyond our locality, and making a lot of new friends too, not just from bands but fellow zine geeks, letter writers and other characters."











and after we'd cleaned up all the piss and puke from the venue and moved the equipment back upstairs, we were faced with a four mile, mainly uphill walk home carrying our guitars—boo fucking hoo! Seriously though, the most amazing thing is that despite the lack of equipment and transport to make things easier, we still managed to put on bloody good gigs."

Active in the Gateshead Music Collective as well as local venue and practice pad, The Station, the Blood Robots became more and more involved with the practicalities of DIY punk.

Micky: "I'd say that we were totally involved. We were organizing our own gigs, being involved in music co-operatives and other co-operatives, putting out tapes and flexi disks, writing fanzines, going on demos, going out Hunt Sabbing, Stop The City, etc."

Sned: "Involved, yes—at first locally, within the punk scene and being involved in The Station, and then branching out bit by bit, writing letters and making friends, leaving home, going to squat gigs, and in 1984 a load of us being inspired enough to put one on in the heart of Gateshead! Some of us were involved in Newcastle Anarchist Group (NAG), which was a bunch of (mainly) young white males meeting in a pub thinking they could change the world—naïve times. The miners strike of course put paid to that!"

Even the music scene that at first seemed larger than life was starting to change. They were able to relate to it differently.

Micky: "There was undoubtedly a sense of belonging. The thing was, at the time it didn't really seem like it was going to end. So many people were into it then that it felt like we could take on capitalism and create a viable alternative culture. Wherever you went, wherever you played, wherever you protested, it seemed like there were so many of us that we were unstoppable."

Sned: "Even then I was a cynical bastard who could predict at the time that things move on and most people were going to grow up and become conformist clichéd fucks, which of course happened! I'd like to think I was aware of the bubble about to burst, although writing this in hindsight…hmm. We were outsiders within the punk scene to a certain extent, in that we didn't look the part and, well, you could put that down to any scene or fashion having its time and then turning into parody. We had a variety of influences between us—quite a wide palette—our entire set changed completely in the space of the year and a half we were around. I'm trying to remember if we were 'cool' or not in the anarcho scene. I think not, anarcho became a parody not unlike punk had. Next!"

Micky: "As my memory is better than Sned's, we were never cool in the scene."

1983 also saw the band go into the studio for the first time to record a demo tape titled *You Fuel The Fire*.

Micky: The title was a line lifted from "The Valley," which was a song on the demo. Essentially that song was about how it is in the interest of global capitalism to keep the poor fighting each other, while arming both sides, how profit and loss is more important than the loss of human life. It's a bit difficult to look retrospectively at lyrics that I wrote twenty years ago without filtering through the more sharpened political thought processes I have now. *You Fuel The Fire* was a collection of songs and lyrics that were heartfelt and earnest at the time. Those songs still mean something to Hec, Sned, and myself now. We sang about the things that we were concerned about, though tried to present our lyrics in a slightly less obvious manner than some of our peers, and approached things in perhaps a slightly different direction."

Sned: It was the first time any of us had ever been in a studio. Michael B was engineering it. He was on a training scheme at Spectro 8 track. I remember it being stressful and against the clock, we didn't really know what we were doing, but there you go—life is a lesson! From January '84 we had a good quality live tape from The Station. We put that on the other side of the demo from then on and made a booklet to go with it. That's probably us at our best on that live side."

Disarmingly melodic, there are no hints of what would come later with Generic, etc. Instead, the music is quite catchy punk not totally unlike the Passion Killers. Lyrically, they covered all the necessary and expected areas.

Sned: "'Pawns,' 'Another Rainy Day,' 'The Valley,' 'Poppies, 'Poetry Competition,' 'Where's the Blood'—four about war and death, one about the rat race, and one about meat-eating relative to war and death! Very basic, an even split of Micky's songs and my songs."

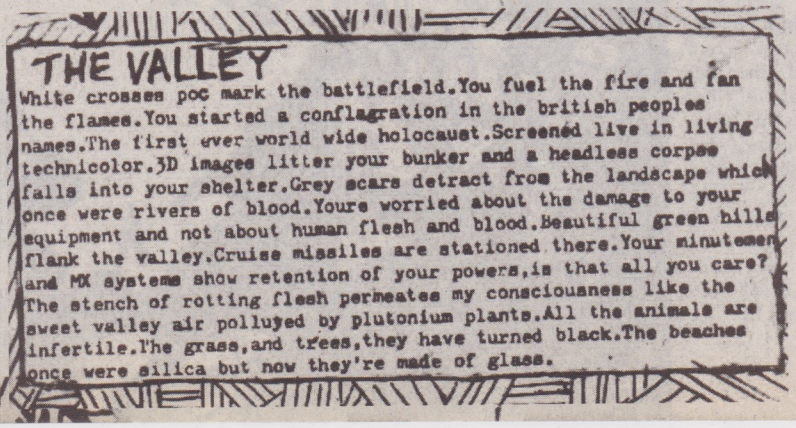
In 1984, the group expanded to a five-piece with Richard joining on vocals.

Sned: "Richard joined us on vocals at the beginning of '84, which enabled Micky and I to rock out on our guitars more, ha ha! When he left that summer we had to re-write the whole lot. We'd changed our entire set in those 18 months."

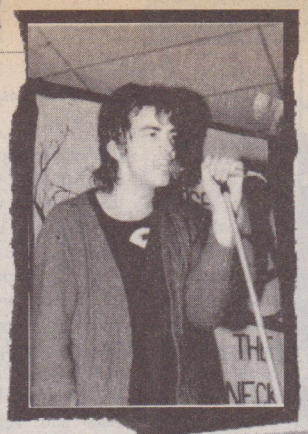
Of the many up and coming Newcastle punk bands at the time, Blood Robots were easily closest to the likeminded Reality Control.

Micky: "They were our closest friends, and the band that we had most in common with in Newcastle. Over in nearby Sunderland we were close to The Famous Imposters, who were far poppier than Blood Robots. They and others were involved in the Bunker (a collective venue with a music co-operative, similar

Micky: "My first gig with the Blood Robots was at Spectro with Reality Control, and rather embarrassingly a load of really straight people from school came, thanks to Andy. I was mortified, though not as much as they were! Generally we might get about 30 to 40 people if it was just RC and us, but a lot more if there was an out of town band playing. We never really played outside of Newcastle that much, unless you count Gateshead and Sunderland. Transport was a major problem. I was the only one who could drive, none of us had a car or access to a car, none of us had the money to hire a vehicle, and none of us had any equipment! We went to gigs on public transport carrying borrowed amps and cabs with us. Even when we played at The Station (where we could use the music collective's equipment), public transport used to finish at 11 pm,


THE VALLEY

White crosses poc mark the battlefield. You fuel the fire and fan the flames. You started a conflagration in the british peoples' names. The first ever world wide holocaust. Screened live in living technicolor. 3D images litter your bunker and a headless corpse falls into your shelter. Grey scars detract from the landscape which once were rivers of blood. Youre worried about the damage to your equipment and not about human flesh and blood. Beautiful green hills flank the valley. Cruise missiles are stationed there. Your minutemen and MX systems show retention of your powers, is that all you care? The stench of rotting flesh permeates my consciousness like the sweet valley air polluted by plutonium plants. All the animals are infertile. The grass, and trees, they have turned black. The beaches once were silica but now they're made of glass.



to The Station in which we were involved) and *Acts Of Defiance* (a fanzine). Further afield, I'd say we were close to the Passion Killers and Kulturkampf from Barnsley and Beeston respectively, and probably Chumbawamba."

Sned: "Reality Control were all two years below us at school. I was just blown away seeing one of their earliest gigs in a local scout hall in 1981. Up until then, Hec and I were not really relating to many people but they shared our seriousness and humor. We became close friends with the two Michaels, working together on gigs, zines, and collectives, leaving home and sharing a flat, a life on the dole in Thatcher's Britain, ha ha! We had friends from the Walker collective in the Illegal Sane and the Abductors (whose Carl played in RC later on). They got me into Minor Threat, Void, DRI, etc.—thanks! We met people through the mail and the zine and tapes as much as through the band. Gateshead Music Collective would meet weekly in the library—some 40 or 50 people would attend—so we got to know all the people there, from bands such as Paralax, The Reptiles, Total Chaos, Equalizers, The End, etc. Hec took over the zine and knew a lot more people from outside the 'punk' world than I did. There were bands like Mannequin, The Natives, and Freak Electric around. There was a lot going on! Out of town visits would be to see Alternative up in Scotland or Chumbawamba in Leeds, inspired communal living."

Reality Control had already released a 7" record. But they were itching to do more. The idea of a split flexi seemed easy and affordable.

Micky: "Was it only a year? Surely it must have been more than that. Well, the motivation was the fact that Reality Control were sure that they weren't getting all they were due from the sale of *The Reproduction Of Hate* EP. It was riding fairly high in the *Sounds* Indie Chart for a while. And also punk was about doing things for ourselves. It probably came about over a few pints in the Newcastle Arms, or in the living room of 121 Fairholm Road!"

Sned: "The living room that doubled up as my bedroom! The two bands played together, hung out and/or lived together. The flexi was the bastard offspring of this love-in. We borrowed the money we needed from our friend, Slob. It was to be a one-sided flexi to be sold for 30p but the tracks were too long, so we had to fork out more for the two-sided version. I wish now it could have been a hard vinyl record, might have got taken a little more seriously, but it was just beyond our means. We did it completely DIY, printed the covers locally at Tyneside Free Press, duplicated three different inserts. We split a day's recording between the bands to do the songs, and did some more songs at the same time. Ours appeared on comps, the RC extra songs went on to be on their second tape, *While we Live in Cages*. When I was at MRR house a few years ago, the flexi was still there (but with green tape on it of course) with my handwritten note asking for a review!"

This cool little record was a one time only release born out of their community.

Sned: "No label name—it was a self-produced DIY collaboration between the bands and some close friends, but part of that experience helped found what became Flat Earth a couple of years later."

With the North largely still ignored even by indie labels, the flexi would be the only major release for Blood Robots.

Micky: "Not for the Blood Robots, or none that I can recall. I'm sure that Reality Control could have released something on a more established label, but that wasn't really what it was about. It wasn't about getting 'signed.' It was more important to do what you could under your own steam, and do it to the best of your ability. Somewhat ironically, had Reality Control released something on Crass or Spiderleg perhaps it would have shifted the emphasis away from the anarcho punk scene being based around bands from the south. With the exception of The Alternative, Chumbawamba, and The System, most of the better-known anarcho bands were from 'dahn sarf,' whereas this did not reflect the level of musical and political activity in the North and in Scotland. Sadly, from a point of flattery only, the only people who wanted to put out Blood Robots records were ourselves!"

Sned: "Despite the 'anarcho' nature of it all, there was a bit of a status thing if you got your record out on Crass Records or whatever, with the good distribution and the 'brand,' which is all well and good, and no disrespect to Crass Records intended! It was all a bit 'down south' for us really, it was important for us to act locally, it was important for us to do it our own way! I remember talking to Boffo from Chumbawamba about this kind of thing, how the northern bands should try and put something together in this collaborative spirit (back then there wasn't the whole DIY distro scene you have these days at all). RC put an EP out on Volume (the local record shop that had taken over from Listen Ear), who'd also put out Total Chaos and Toy Dolls records. Tapes were still a valid media. My bedding grant went on a double tape deck, and a lot of copying later. We were getting ourselves heard. It was a bit later when vinyl became some sort of 'credibility,' and later still there's a glut of vinyl and poor quality control!"

The remaining Blood Robots tracks would be spread out over various compilations.

Sned: "We recorded three extra songs when we did the flexi with Richard singing, which were used on the *Compulsory Overtime* LP on a US label, which had a strange mix of punk and experimental stuff, and *Tracks from The Station*, which was the Gateshead collectives comp LP. The other song was destined for *Bullshit Detector 4*, which Crass started work on, but it never came to pass. We were also on shitloads of tape compilations. It was a great way for people to get involved: compile a tape!"

With Richard having left, the group never totally got it together again, eventually splitting up for good.

Micky: "Sned left and we probably didn't go after him!"

Sned: "Hec went off mushroom picking instead of coming to practice one time in Fall '84 and that was it! That was the final straw. We hadn't really recovered from Richard leaving and we were just disillusioned at that time. Late 1984 was the end of a lot of the peace and love anarcho punk times for me. Micky and I were getting more into class struggle politics, I guess, and were getting into faster and harsher music, while Hec was off being a bloody hippie."

With the Blood Robots dead, Micky and Sned continued playing music together for some time.

Micky: "I went on to play guitar in the first lineup of Generic. When that ended in '86 I went on to concentrate on anarcho syndicalist political activities. Eventually I got bored of being totally serious and got involved in Class War, and formed another band, which was kind of tuneful punk with a violin, called Anything But That. I loathe the term 'folk punk' and apart from the

violin there was no other connection to folk music. Alec and I then went on to form One By One, and since we didn't really want to be in a band with any of the drummers in Newcastle we jumped in the car and drove down to Leeds to press gang Sned into joining. We did a tour of Europe, I ended up falling in love with Karin, and One By One acquired another vocalist! We did lots of tours and a few records ('91 to '94) and then it kind of fizzled out as we all thought that we wanted to do different things. Alec and Sned were in Health Hazard/ Suffer while Karin and I formed Ebola. Alec and Sned were surprised when we turned up in Belgium to play a gig with Suffer, surprised more when we started playing as we had told them that Ebola was a pop punk band! After many records, tours, and lineup changes Ebola died sometime in the summer of 2001. Totally and completely by accident I met up with some likeminded souls in Newcastle, and Jinn was formed. Karin and I then became parents to Jasmine, and Jinn have subsequently released three split LPs and a split 10". I see Hec about two or three times a year when he comes over from Ireland. I see Sned whenever I play down in Leeds or Bradford, or whenever he plays in Newcastle. I have seen Andy perhaps once or twice since he left the band, and not knowingly since he crossed over to the dark side of the force.

"I got an email from Richard out of the blue, about a year or so back. I pondered for a long time as to whether I should answer it. I then got a couple of emails from someone who I definitely didn't want to hook up with again, and then felt a bit more positive about getting in touch with Richard. But before I got round to it my hard drive died and I lost his email address, along with countless others!

"If you want to know what any of these bands sound like then you can download stuff from: http://www.gibboncore.demon.co.uk/ or http://www.flatearth.free-online.co.uk/."

Sned: "Hec was drumming in the Rhombus of Doom about the time we split up, a kind of space rock/ experimental band. He was later in Freak Electric and Mannequin. He's got a band going over in Eire nowadays, as well as doing excellent artwork, and works as a gardener. I went on and did Flat Earth Records, and have put out about 50 releases over the last 19 years, including most of the bands Micky has mentioned above, successfully avoiding a real job. Micky, Hec, and I are all in touch and are indeed friends for life. Andy became a policeman, so fuck him! I don't know what any other ex members are doing."

Both Micky and Sned have remained committed and deeply involved with the big A and little A anarcho politics.

Micky: "Yes that's why I'm still in a hardcore punk band now when so many of my peers 'sold their souls to the highest bidder.' (Sorry, I couldn't resist the Reality Control pun there!)

Seriously though, loads of people sold out to the mainstream music industry, but unfortunately for me and my bank balance, this shit is a bit too ingrained in me to become an employee of a large music corporation. I have mellowed now to the extent that if that is the path that people wish to pursue, then that is their choice, as long as they didn't pretend to be a DIY punk band in the first place. Politically, I still regard myself as an anarcho syndicalist, and if it wasn't for the anarcho punk movement I'm sure that it would have found me a lot longer to find a name to put to my nascent political feelings."

Sned: "Core beliefs hold true, despite being rocked somewhat. Punk and anarcho punk helped me sharpen my focus, helped me deal with life in general. There are always new and original ways to express these beliefs. It's important to keep that in mind—there is no rulebook of anarcho punk and it's about time I put a Crass quote in here: 'Movements are systems and systems kill' (from the song 'Punk Is Dead'). Twenty years on and I'm still angry and disgusted with people and the world in general, probably more so, still questioning everything."

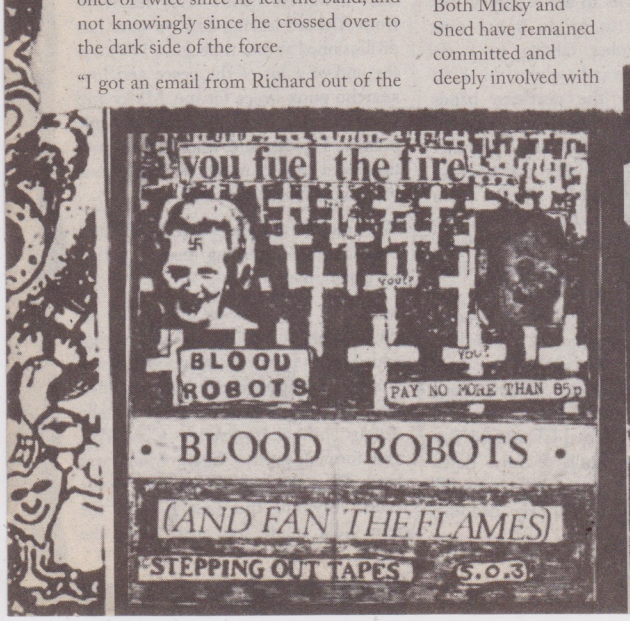
With that, they have a different perspective as to whether the movement was revolutionary or naïve, as they are still living it.

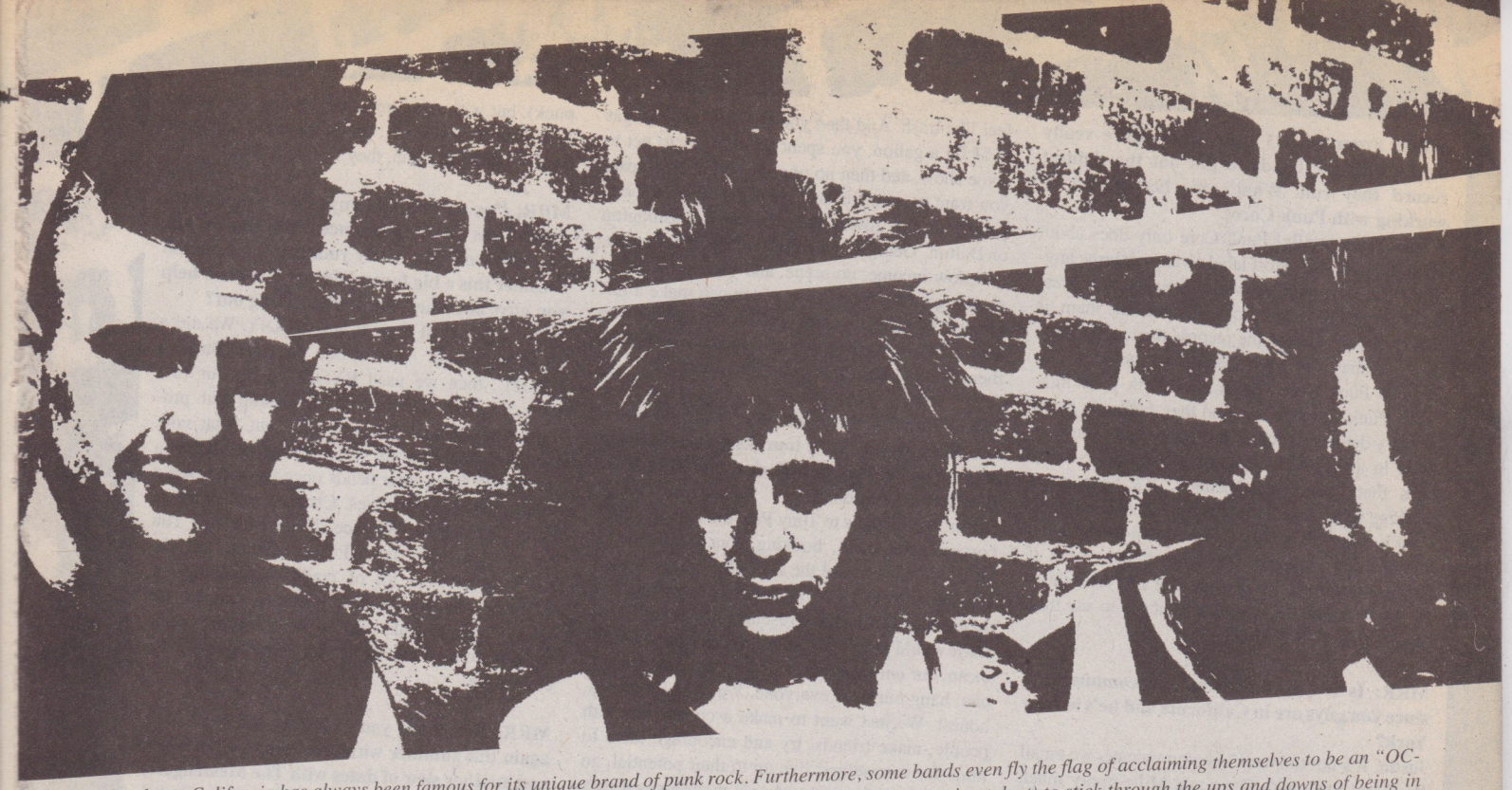
Micky: "I suppose it's both, really. We didn't overthrow capitalism, but I think in a small way we planted the seeds that you now see in the anti-globalization protests, in the animal rights movement. We helped push issues to the fore which were previously the preserve of mainstream political parties, and in some way helped remind people that politics wasn't limited to party politics. We rekindled the tradition of working class and agrarian self-organization, which had floundered in the '70s, and set it to the soundtrack of our own anger."

Sned: "Effective in perhaps empowering oneself, but pretty fucking naive on the whole, I really thought we could change things by having anarchist meetings! I don't know whether I was naive then or am bitter and twisted now. There are definitely positive repercussions from that era and those times, but it's not always so immediate or apparent."

Still, they don't take too many trips down memory lane with new and exciting bands waiting for them around every corner.

Micky: "Just to continue the theme that I have pursued all the way through the interview, while this is all very nice and flattering, we do not live in the past. The most important thing is to go out and support the bands that exist now. The bands may have stepped up a few gears, and there may not be the sense of common purpose that was synonymous with the early '80s. However, there are a lot of good young bands out there still shouting about the bad things in the world, playing all sorts of sub genres of punk and hardcore. And perhaps they need people's support more than the bands of the early '80s."





THE SCARRED

Southern California has always been famous for its unique brand of punk rock. Furthermore, some bands even fly the flag of acclaiming themselves to be an "OC-sounding" punk band. Seldom nowadays do any of these bands have enough drive and grit (not to mention talent) to stick through the ups and downs of being in a rock 'n' roll band and still connect with fans on a personal level, while putting on an energetic and tight show. Enter The Scarred (who need no introduction), one of So Cal's finest bunch of punks to be taking the scene by storm today. After the demise of a few previous bands, The Scarred picked up where those bands left off and hit the ground running. After taking the name, The Scarred self-released Repression, a ten-song record that kicks you in the teeth the entire way though. This was recorded after the band had been together only for a year. Needless to say, copies were in high demand and sold out very quickly. In 2004, the band went back into the studio to record two new songs that would be pressed on a split 7" (colored vinyl to boot) with New Jersey's Void Control on Puke 'n' Vomit records, all of this on top of touring the country (without a booking agent, mind you) almost non-stop. Finally, in the fall of 2005 Punk Core records signed The Scarred and sent them straight into the studio to record their much-anticipated sophomore effort No Solution. *I had the chance and privilege to chat with guitarist/vocalist Justin Willits about the force that is The Scarred, and here's the dirt.*

Interview and introduction by Brad Jamison (havocthreat@hotmail.com)

MRR: First off, how's the new record doing?

Justin: Well, most importantly, it seems like people really dig it. We've gotten a lot of good reviews so far, which is great. As far as sales go or whatever, I'm really not in touch with how that even works, but I understand it's doing well online at Interpunk and Punkutopia.

MRR: From what I hear, Punk Core really works with the bands to put out the tightest record they can. What's the best aspect of working with Punk Core?
Justin: Yeah, totally! Punk Core only does about six releases a year. Most labels will just throw anything out there and see what happens. The great thing about Punk Core, love them or hate them, is that they only put out the records they really love, and that they can stand behind all the way. I've been to Punk Core HQ in New York (The infamous Punk Core shanty) and they really do listen to *every* demo that comes through. They even save them in a big stack. Ours was one of the lucky ones that came recommended. It's been great working with them. I kid you not, Dave from Punk Core is one of the coolest, most down-to-earth and humble guys I know. He'll bring you water if you're hung over, he'll even take off your shoes for you. I know he wouldn't want me to say that, but it's true, he's the man.

MRR: Is it hard sometimes to communicate since you guys are in California and he's in New York?
Justin: It's not too hard to communicate, we email back and forth with Dave and Mike pretty much daily, and as anyone who knows Dave knows, when you get on the phone with that guy, you do a year's worth of catching up just in that call.

MRR: What was the band's reaction when you were asked to join the ranks of bands like The Virus, Lower Class Brats, and Defiance? Pretty exciting news, I imagine.
Justin: We were stoked. You know, a lot of people talk shit, well, I should say, *some* people talk shit on Punk Core because of the spiky hair and mohawks, whatever, but Punk Core single-handedly re-popularized and brought back into the limelight a form of punk that was sorely missed in the late '80s and early '90s. Look at any book about punk rock and you'll see the black hole between say, 1988 and 1993. Who was there? I mean, for fuck's sake, people in the punk scene were praising Nirvana, for crying out loud. So we were stoked; I have a lot of respect for that label. Anyone with a brain would.

MRR: How difficult is to manage recording, touring and making merch, with all the aspects of being in a band with family life?
Justin: Oh, that's a good question. Well, firstly, we've been in the red since day one, and we're deeper in debt now than ever. We've never made money, and because of that, and because we are always on tour, we have no money at home. As you can imagine, it puts a lot of stress on us, but I'm not too proud to take food from food banks. Shit, I have food in my cupboard right now from food banks. You learn to live on very limited income.

MRR: Are there times on the road that you're just like, "Man, this sucks," because something went the wrong way? What keeps you motivated 2000 miles from home?
Justin: Oh hell yeah, I want to quit all the time. Picture running 20 miles a day for five days, that's how you feel from just a week of touring. You just feel like trash. And then you're out of money, gas is $4.00 a gallon, you spent $80 in tolls to get to some show, and then no one shows up. Hell yeah, you want to quit. But what really motivated me is getting to play towns like Aberdeen, Washington or Dalton, Georgia, where it's really low population, low income, no scene, and you go there and people go nuts. You see how you can make a difference in people's lives and encourage them to keep doing what they want, and watch people out there doing it DIY and getting involved

MRR: Now, for those who don't tour, how hard is it to book your own tour, keep numbers and addresses, load your stuff, deal merch and find time to talk to kids?
Justin: Well thanks to Tony Pee, the merch table is covered. But dude, booking your own tours is *hard*. We used to use the BYOFL, but now it is a website only, and a lot of really lame people post on there. It's still a great resource, but I really wish *MRR* would put it back into print. It can be hard. I mean, our *one* goal of tour is to really meet everyone, hang out with everyone. We're not assholes, honest. We just want to make a connection with people, make friends, try and encourage them to think for themselves, live up to their potential, go for their own dreams, and do it themselves if they can! So it can be frustrating running around, calling promoters, trying to watch the gear and unload, and not being able to have time for kids. But you know, that's why we ask the kids at shows for help watching the table. A lot of bands don't trust the kids with money or whatever. Or with their gear: we always do. It gives us a chance to get that stuff done but still hang out with people.

MRR: The Clampdown Tour, how did this come about? I hear it has to do with someone's nipples?
Justin: [Laughs] Yeah, we did the first Clampdown Tour with a band from Kansas called KTP. The Clampdown Tour is a pet project of mine, which is all about taking good bands on the road that maybe aren't signed or have no other means of exposure. Anyway, one of the *many* nights (on the tour just before the first Clampdown Tour) where a show was cancelled and we all had no money, we were sleeping in the parking lot of a movie theatre in Peoria, and we all had to put these battery clamps (for an AC/DC adapter from a truck stop) on our nipples and let them go completely. For the record, Spencer and Thomas, KTP's friends, hold the record for being able to stand the clamps the longest. Anyway, the next March (2005) we named the tour after it. Now it is an annual thing, we just came off the second one.

MRR: Compared to the first one, how did the second annual Clampdown Tour go?
Justin: That's a tough one. Neither Clampdown Tour was successful financially, but that's not the point, is it? It's not about money—money is just a necessary evil to being able to move from town to town and eat. But, you know…it did OK. People are starting to remember the name of the tour, and know that we're always bringing cool unsigned bands on tour with us. So it went well. This time we brought Destruct, a band from Los Angeles. They're like The Havoc (when The Havoc was punk), but with much more of a tough, Discharge feel. They're awesome, check them out, get their new 7"! Support them, they're totally DIY.

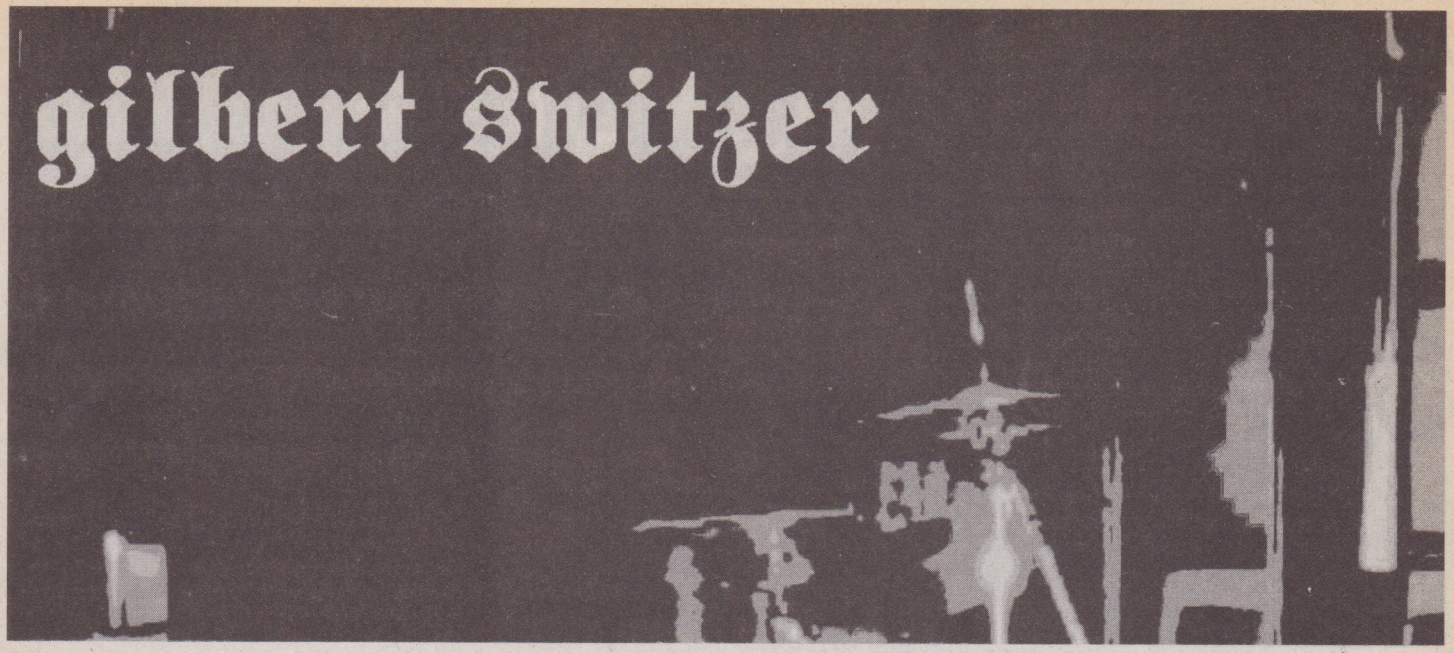
MRR: I've noticed you guys take a band with maybe less road experience with you on the Clampdown Tour. Many younger bands would consider this a big favor. Did any one band help you guys out when you were starting out?
Justin: No, not at first. It was all DIY. We did a demo DIY and sent it out to zines through BYOFL, then we used BYOFL to do our first tours. Once we had a good relationship with promoters and venues, we took KTP out. That said, though, I want to make sure I say that we *did* get a lot of help from other bands once we had made a small name for ourselves. Cheap Sex, Kamikaze Zero, The Havoc, Menace, Neon Maniacs. You know, really, Nat from Puke N Vomit records, *really* deserves a lot of credit for helping us. Anyways, no matter what happens with us, we always want to make sure to support other bands who are doing it themselves and keeping that punk ethic alive.

MRR: I've heard you're hitting the road once again this summer with label mates Cheap Sex and another slew of dates with The Messengers. How did you come to know Mike [Virus] and the rest of the guys?
Justin: Just playing shows with them, really. Actually, Brock, the new bass player for Cheap Sex, is a good friend of mine, and he got us shows with them in the first place.

MRR: I know *No Solution* has just recently come out, but do you guys have any plans of recording some new songs as demos, a 7" or split anytime soon?
Justin: I *love* vinyl. I'd love to do a split with Vengeance 77, or with *any* of the Punk Core bands. I'm a big fan of Monster Squad—really there are a lot of good bands out these days. And while I'm mentioning it, you guys should all check out The Messengers live, way better than recorded. Night and day. But yeah, we are working on some new songs, obviously *No Solution* is still brand spanking new, but we don't want to pull a Havoc and have ten years between albums, so we're always working on new material. We've actually got some blues stuff, some reggae stuff, some rock stuff, and a lot of '77 punk rock stuff. Who knows what'll end up on the record. We don't limit ourselves to playing "street punk," whatever that is. And you know, Punk Core is really supportive of that. It's not all about dumpsters and 40 oz. to them, like some people say. They're really supportive of us being who we are.

MRR: Any closing words?
Justin: I want to honestly say a heartfelt thank you to everyone who's buying the new album, it means a lot to us. We're doing this because we love it. We've never made a dime and you guys all mean a lot to us! And Andy, stop being retarded, you're not Duane. Wise up, so everyone can go back to liking you. Oh yeah, and Mickey from Dalton, you just need love, so stop being an ass and acting like you're sooo hardcore. Being rude doesn't make you punk, it makes you an asshole.

gilbert Switzer



Gilbert Switzer likes to say that they're "less a band than a three-person punk rock carnival." Sure, they're interested in making good music by the usual means—Über D does vocals, while Poison Ivy and Ash F switch off on guitar and drums—but the Halifax, Nova Scotia, group has made its reputation as much on their extreme, unpredictable shows as on their sparse but powerful songs. The group originally planned to make the mysterious Gilbert Switzer (in the form of a click track) their phantom bassist, but abandoned the idea after deciding the straight up three-piece made for a freer, more aggressive sound.

Soon after their first album, Don't Stop the Film *(2004), started getting nods on national university charts, Switzer teamed up with local hardcore spearhead Chik White's Divorce Records to release* American Idols *(2005), which was quickly followed by a split 7" with White's the Hold. The band even came up with a new name, "crazy-wave," for their brand of punk rock, though they're quick to say that they have no desire to invent yet another new kind of "wave" or add to an already unwieldy list of subcategories. Gilbert Switzer is punk, pure and simple, and like any punk worth the name, their crazy-wave is a promise that when it comes to traditional and generic expectations, all bets are off.*

Interview by Sarah Feldman. Photos by David Cieplinski. Contact Gilbert Switzer at gilbertswitzer@hotmail.com

What's crazy-wave?

Über: We wanted to do something that was part of the same pedigree of punk rock as what's out there now, but that was more inclusive. Something that avoided the whole compartmentalizing attitude that you see in punk these days.

Ash: I also find a big part of what we do live is kind of trying to engage the audience and involve them. Über's line is that people should be more interested in play than entertainment—and we see what we do as not so much entertainment but play that doesn't just involve the three of us, that involves the audience too.

Über: Like when I throw myself on top of them they kind of have to contribute to the performance in some way.

Ash: Even if it's just to defend themselves. At least they're getting involved.

So it's more about the impact on the audience than what you're putting out as performers, then?

Ash: It's definitely not a musical genre. I think we can safely say that.

I was interested in what you said to the Dalhousie Gazette about throwing around a lot of band ideas before you settled on your sound—Gilbert Switzer has such a unique sound, it's hard to imagine you as anything else.

Über: You mean you can't imagine us being a prog-metal band?

Poison: What about a sludgy doom-wave lazy slow band?

Ash: We bang a gong. We get it on. That's all that matters.

You mentioned that you had considered doing a pop band?

Ash: When Über and I were first talking about putting a band together, I had some songs I'd written in a power pop style. The original idea was that I would sing and maybe he'd play guitar. I believe that the quote from Über after he'd listened to the songs a few times was that he didn't think he could be Randy Rhodes in a band. He had to be Ozzy. So I thought, "let's try that."

Über: I like to play guitar sometimes, but for some reason I'm more interested in ideas and performance. I'm not really interested in being a musician.

It seems as if performance is a pretty crucial part of Switzer's identity. What makes that live energy so important?

Ash: I feel we have so much room to move onstage. We're not hampered by a whole bunch of us being up there, with amps and stuff in the way. I think that the stand up kit is also a big part of why we have a lot of energy onstage, because when you're standing up you can dance and move way more than a normal drummer can.

Ash: I think probably my favorite show was one we played at NASCAD [Nova Scotia College of Art and Design] last fall. The other bands had set up on the stage but we set up on the floor, right in there with the crowd. There was no space for us at all and it was awesome. We were completely surrounded; I couldn't see Poison or Über for most of the set.

Poison: Those moments are my favorites too. I like to be touched. I like being in the audience. I like feeling the heat of the sweat on the floor.

Ash: It's just a dynamic like you're crammed in an elevator and you're filled with anxiety. It's not like you're attracted to the people or like it's a pleasurable thing, touching the audience or being touched by them.

Poison: It is for me. Not a sexual pleasure, just a...

Ash: I think Poison and I kind of have opposite motivations in this, because I don't really like to be touched by the audience. I throw myself into that situation deliberately, because I know it'll make me tense and make me play harder.

Have you ever run into problems with that?

Ash: We haven't had any serious, serious injuries in the band. Über hurt his back once at Stage Nine. He jumped off the stage and fell down on the floor.

Poison: And then rolled around awhile in broken glass.

Über: I had a few more beers than I usually have and I was really feeling the chaos and the noise and I, uh, wasn't being very cautious. But I think one of my favorite shows was that Divorce showcase where we played after the Hold. Sometimes I play a little drunk and sometimes I'm completely sober and I was completely sober at that show and I found that I had more control. I felt that I really had power over the audience.

Poison: I'd like to know how that feels. I have—it's like a disease, almost, I feel completely out of touch with reality and I feel like I'm on a different astral plane. I was pretty sure today that I found a tear in the space-time continuum—underneath the cupboard. We were wondering why the soda kept going flat and the bagels kept going moldy in that spot. So I felt like if I could cross through that and go to another dimension I'd probably be better off. Somewhere that I'd be able to focus on things. If I was able to focus on things right now I'd be in school; I might have a business open, and a lot of things would be going well for me but I wouldn't be able to play music—I wouldn't be in this band.

How much improvisation do you guys do in performance?

Ash: Über has been known to improvise vocals.

Über: I do that a lot. Sometimes I do it because I forget. Sometimes I do it because I want to express how I feel right then to make it more authentic.

Do you improvise in the music at all?

Ash: To some degree. I think some people are under the impression that we write all our songs onstage. Which is absolutely not the case. Our songs all have structure—I don't know where people get the idea that our songs are all completely improvised beginning to end. We do write the songs in advance, we practice them a lot before we play them

And we know how we want them to sound.

Poison: Don't tell people that we practice! Now we have no excuse.

Ash: I know, I know. I guess I would liken the band to, you know, a small fast car—we're not going to be able to pull a big boat up a hill but we can, you know, manage small alleys and things.

Poison: I mean, if we had a Corvette, we'd use it. We'd totally use it, show it off, gun it down Barrington, know what I'm saying?

Um. No.

Poison: People with small genitalia tend to have big gear. They either have big gear or rock out really hard.

Can you say that again? I think the tape ran out.

Poison: I like Camembert on Ritz crackers—with maybe a bit of black pepper.

What about the onstage chemistry between the three of you? How do you get it to work so that the energy kind of comes from all three directions at once, instead of being concentrated on the lead singer?

Poison: We're all really close friends. I met Derrick when I was eleven or twelve. My big sister took me to this place called Café Ole and was like, "you have to wear these fishnets and boots and also I'm going to shave your head." But it was a real hard rock/punk club —for kids. I saw this band called the Chits with the most amazing female vocalist. I'd just never seen anything like that in my entire life. Derrick was playing drums in that band. He also did, and still does, a radio show at [Halifax University station] CKDU and when I was young and first getting into punk I couldn't afford to buy any music or anything so I'd just record his show every week.

Ash: I met Über through CKDU—he began doing a show there in 2003, and he got me into a lot of groups I hadn't even heard of at the time. He kept saying that we should go down to an open mic and I could play drums and we could do some Germs covers. At the same time, Poison was sort of bugging me to get a band together. I introduced them to each other and Über was very shy and Poison was very drunk. I don't think they knew what to make of each other, that first meeting, but the chemistry ended up working.

Poison: And I've woken up in the same bed with Über and he had a massive massive hard-on.

Ash: See, this is what gets us into trouble in these interviews.

Poison: Oh yeah, shit!

Über: This is the boner story. We were on tour. Tobias [of Divorce label mates band Be Bad] and Poison and me were sleeping on the couch and I woke up in the morning and I said to myself, that's not a very big boner, maybe no one will notice.

Poison: It was enormous, like, camping section at Canadian Tire enormous.

Ash: None of us are involved with each other in any way sexually nor have we been at any point nor are we likely to be at any point.

Poison: Troy and I have a sexual chemistry that we'll never act on, because it only happens onstage.

Ash: They express their sexual energy through a non-sexual means, in the music. The energy may be sexual but the outcome of it isn't.

What's next for you guys?

Poison: Our next project is a Gilbert Switzer aerobics workout video.

Ash: It involves a lot of contorting and swinging people around by their ankles.

Poison: A lot of gyrating, hip-thrusts.

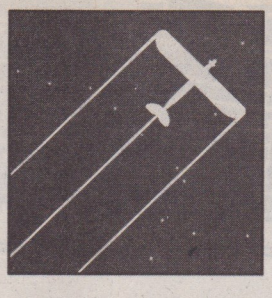
Ash: And falling, there's quite a bit of falling.

Poison: Stretching, punching.

Ash: Breaking.

Poison: Smashing, thrusting, smash, thrust, smash.

Digital SmartGuy



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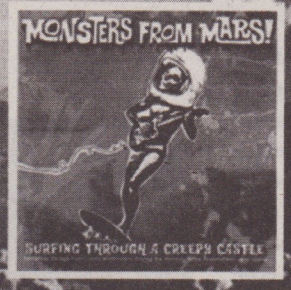

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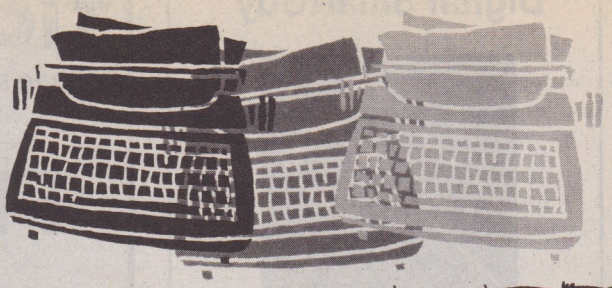

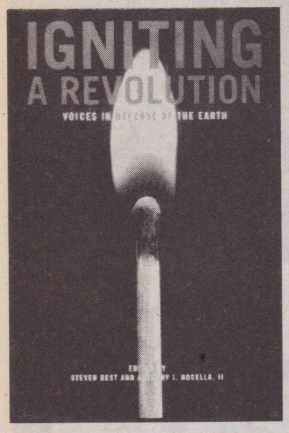

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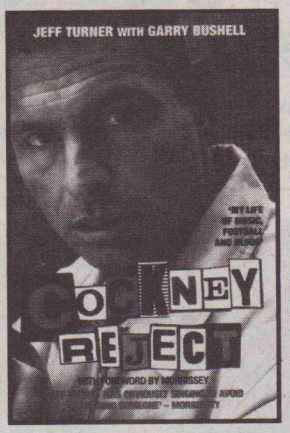
Igniting A Revolution is an anthology of revolutionary environmentalism. According to the editors, one of the essential purposes of this collection is to separate environmentalism from white male privilege and represent the diversity of the movement. This is definitely a worthy goal, and I think the editors achieve that in varying degrees with their selection of essays. I appreciate the increasing incorporation of social justice issues in the ecology movement. The writers represented run the gamut of activists and academics, including social ecology, deep ecology, direct action, primitivism, eco-feminism, indigenous struggles, political prisoners, and more.

Igniting A Revolution consists of seven sections. Part I, "The History and Nature of Revolutionary Environmentalism," provides a broad overview of revolutionary ecology, including deep ecology, social ecology, Earth First! and the ELF. The essays in this section offer a useful background to contemporary radical/revolutionary ecology. Part II, "Sustainability and the Politics of Consumption," includes essays on consumerism, the manipulation of the media, and politics of everyday life, and the works included are accessible and thought provoking. Part III, "Religion and Spirituality," covers various examinations of religion from an environmental view. For the most part, this section wasn't of particular interest to me, if only because, as an atheist, I'm not specifically concerned with religious arguments for an environmental world view. The exception was the essay "Stick Sanding Strong," which is more of a history of Wounded Knee and the case of Leonard Peltier. Part IV's topic is "Primitivism and the Critique of Civilization." I find primitivism problematic in that at best it's unrealistic, at worst indefensibly callous to the concerns of the majority of the world's population, but it would be amiss not to include this perspective in an anthology of modern ecology. Part V, "Repression and Resistance," addresses state repression as experienced by political prisoners and activists. This is perhaps the most inspiring section and the authors included illustrate the complementary nature of various struggles impressively, as well as the commitment and defiance of the authors. Part VI, "Direct Action and Beyond," discusses the necessity for, and the advantages and limitations of, direct action. Part VII, "Social Movements and Alliance Politics," stresses the interconnectedness of environmental struggle and other struggles against oppression, and the need to recognize this relationship.

As is the nature of anthologies, some essays are considerably stronger than others. This is of course due in large part to one's personal orientation. For example, I'm not a big fan of deep ecology or primitivism, and on the other hand greatly admire many of the political prisoners included in this work and have a greater appreciation of the writers whose work emphasizes the interconnected nature of social justice issues and environmental issues. The strength of *Igniting A Revolution* lies in it's diverse viewpoints, as even the ideas with which I disagree are food for thought, and as a whole the book affirms the growing urgency of the crisis we face as well as the determination to resist and counter the degradation of the planet and it's inhabitants.

—Tress



Cockney Reject – My Life Of Football, Music and Blood
Jeff Turner with Gary Bushell
274 pages
John Blake
3 Bramber Court, 2 Bramber Road, London, W14 9PB
www.blake.co.uk

Whilst being a huge fan of the early Cockney Rejects I wasn't sure that I really needed to read an autobiography of the singer. That was until I picked up Jeff Turner's *Cockney Reject*. This is book is so much more than an account of a band that only really released one classic LP and a bunch of mediocre to frankly unlistenable ones. This book tells the blood and guts tale of the band from their beginnings on the backstreets of the East End all the way through to their Top Of The Pops appearances, failed forays into hard rock and all the way back.

What makes this story so compelling, aside from Turner's easy to read tabloid writing style is that the Rejects were the real deal. They lived the life that many punks of the time aspired to live. While most of the formative punk bands in England's capital were posh art school kids feigning poverty and a leftist working class attitude the Rejects were a bunch of hard-nosed cheeky East End chancers who really did come from the arse end of a council estate. This book reads as much like *Among The Thugs* or *The Football Factory* as it does a musical history. Both Stinky Turner (singer for the Rejects) and his brother Mickey (guitarist) were boxers and staunch West Ham United fans, their hardcore local fanbase was made up of well known ICF (Inner City Firm, one of the most renowned and feared football hooligan organizations) members, including Hodges who went on to front the initial incarnation of the 4 Skins. The band's tours often disintegrated into full scale punch ups with skinheads and football fans from other areas who had got wind of the band's affiliation with West Ham.

Turner's stories of how the Rejects conned Jimmy Pursey and Gary Bushell into paying for the recording of their first single even though they didn't have a drummer and weren't even a real band, or how they terror-

ized Billy Idol in the street for being a poseur, or getting thrown out the Sounds offices for starting fights, being banned from EMI, stealing anything that wasn't nailed down from recording studios etc are priceless. Every other page there is another huge ruck, some poor sod getting slapped or the Rejects walking off with something they shouldn't. It's amazing that Turner was just 14 at the start of the Rejects and 17 when they split, the stuff that happened in between is enough for a lifetime.

Whilst there is plenty of teenage bravado in the book, and I am sure some embellishment, Turner's honesty and candidness is refreshing. The story of the Rejects is the backbone of the book, but it is as much about Turner's growth as a teenager and a man amongst the turmoil of the late '70s and '80s culminating in the split of the band and Turner's plummet back down to the "real world." The final chapters of the book cover what happened after the band and the band's eventual reformation, one which I had little interest in until reading this book. The key to a good biography is the writer's ability to create a bond with the reader, where the reader is involved and pulling for the writer. Turner manages to portray himself as not much more than a petty criminal with violent outbursts, yet he clearly has a heart of gold and is as much a result of his surroundings and upbringing as any real flaws in character. I found myself liking the guy immensely, and before I knew it I'd devoured the book in two sittings, which is some testament to Turner's ability to turn a good tale. This book is not just for fans of the Rejects, in fact I would recommend this book to anyone willing to leave literary prejudices at the door who is interested in a getting a window into late '70s working class London along with stories of fighting, football and rock 'n' roll.

—Tim Brooks

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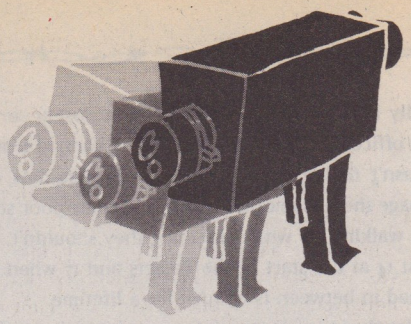
The author/artist has compiled notes and impressions from his trips to Thailand, Laos, and Cambodia. The typical entry is a page with a cartoon style drawing and a sentence or paragraph of text. Mats!? provides tips on sights to see, methods of transportation, social pitfalls (keep your feet and your Thai currency separated or risk the wrath of a King-devoted people who don't take kindly to their King's picture being dirtied!), and other things you'd like to know.

Besides the author's cartoon work, he also got some contributions from a photographer and did some paintings. The photos help to prove that some of the places Mats!? enjoyed really exist (when it comes to Buddhist Theme Parks with Psychotronic displays of Hell's Terrors, photos help!) and the paintings (Asian Motif Surrealist Modern stuff) are very pretty to my eye. Additionally, Mats!? prints a section from a Buddhist pamphlet that looks like transmographied Jack Chic work. There's plenty in this book to make you think the streets of these lands ain't exactly like the guidebooks say. And isn't always good to know what's really up before you get there?

Besides being an enjoyable read/armchair adventure, the book seems like it would be useful when traveling in the countries involved. Enjoy!

—Seth Hollander

MOVIES



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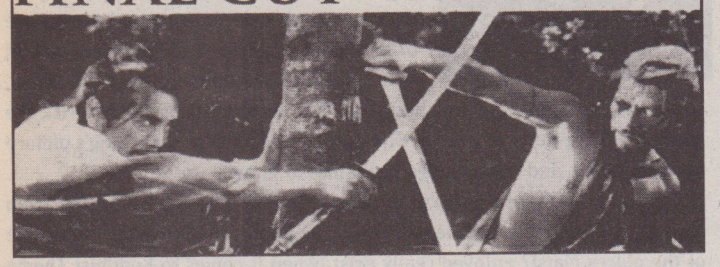


BLOODY REVOLUTIONS

By the conclusion of Oliver Stone's **Twin Towers**, one is left with a feeling for the sheer scale of the destruction—but uncharacteristically, he steps away from its political context. Linda Ellman's documentary, **On Native Soil**, attempts to remedy this, sifting through the rubble of familiar footage to frame the event as a kind of "official history." Critics were quick to discredit Michael Moore's **Fahrenheit 9/11**, and it's clear that Ellman wanted to distance herself from similar films. The result is a documentary that cleverly poses critiques that are nearly impossible to undermine.

Ellman, formerly a news producer at NBC, bases her film primarily on one exhaustive source: the massive text of the government's own *9/11 Commission Report*. The Commission wouldn't even have existed if not for the protests and lobbying of the victims' families—the one group in a unique position to stand up to the Bush administration's tight-lipped response. Ellman documents how this group was able to put Bush under such pressure that disclosure proved to be a more attractive option than keeping the potentially damning documents classified. As Ellman and the Commission describe, 9/11 was an embarrassing combination of poor planning, a near total lack of communication, and a fair amount of incompetence.

Of course, 9/11 is too large and its fallout too great to condense into a few hours; the stories, small and large, will continue to be felt by many Americans for a long time. In keeping with this, Ellman came upon an ingenious way of telling the story: instead of a straightforward chronological history, **On Native Ground** adopts a style that, as she remarks, "falls in on itself." Since we know what happens, the storyline works the way that human memory does, moving forward and then ruminating over a series of events that, it seems, might very well have been prevented with proper foresight.

It's possible that that many potential viewers have already reached a kind of 9/11 "burn-out." All the familiar footage, arguments, and complaints are paraded before us on the nightly news; most might feel that 9/11 can't possibly seem "fresh" anymore. This suspicion was born out at my showing; the audience could be counted on one hand.

But Ellman is a skilled filmmaker. Watching **On Native Soil** confounds your expectations with its carefully compressed timeline. To be sure, all the expected imagery shows up here: footage of one, then another of the Twin Towers in flame; the heart-rending scenes of desperate victims jumping to the ground to avoid being burned to death; the collapse of one, then another of the towers into dust, followed a blizzard of debris; the surreal scenes of thousands of men and women fleeing downtown New York on streets and bridges. The editing gives you a feeling for the breadth of the destruction—the kind of thing that a movie screen captures in a way that a television simply cannot. It's far more real than any Hollywood reconstruction could ever be.

Clearly, this is a story of loss, so one is grateful that the narrative is marbled with at least a few stories of life somehow winning out. The most memorable may be that of Stanley Prainmath, who'd quickly exited Tower Two after the first was hit. His business associates assured him that he'd be safe, so he sheepishly returned to his office on the 84th floor. Soon after the second plane hit, he found he'd fallen nearly 80 floors, and survived only by being in a reinforced shaft. On hearing his cries, another businessman, Brian Clark, heard his voice from the darkness and miraculously him pulled him to safety. It was like a terrifying reprise of the famous Buster Keaton gag in which the comic survives a building crumbling all around him.

On Native Ground fleshes out every response America made to the 9/11 bombings while developing its own dry irony. The narration, by Kevin Costner and Hilary Swank, shows the degree to which "responsible" agencies shuffled responsibility to others. There was a complete absence of communication between intelligence agencies. US air defenses sent planes into the air, but without ammunition, and in the opposite direction that they were needed. Cell phones from passengers and crew on the planes were repeatedly put on hold, and frequently confused with other flights. Once, a dispatcher responded as if *he* were the one being inconvenienced.

Of course, one could argue that the US was a country faced by an unprecedented threat. However, by Ellman's account, both the Clinton and Bush administrations had ample intelligence about Al Qaeda. Just before the Twin Tower bombings, one intelligence officer even outlined the plot in detail.

On Native Soil turns out to be a surprisingly gripping story about how a few victims' families pulled together and managed to confront the government and rescue what truth they could. Linda Ellman all makes it clear that these are the unsung heroes of 9/11.

Some may find it ironic that 9/11 receives such attention when vastly worse atrocities happen at our own backyard (and sometimes with American support). Director Pamela Yates' documentary, **State of Fear**, has a title that recalls 1973 feature film by Costa-Gavras, **State of Siege;** in different ways, both address the grim realities of recent Latin American history. After 9/11, this story has levels of currency one may not have anticipated.

It's never been a secret that the highlands of Peru are as starkly beautiful as they are impoverished. The land resists farming, and the weather can be punishing. The indigenous people survive, but just barely, and their voice is so distant from urban Lima that many Peruvians scarcely acknowledge their existence.

This had been the situation for longer than most could remember. The breaking point came with Maoist intellectual Abimal Guzman. Almost 40 years ago, he saw a land ready for his brand of revolution. He wouldn't think of anything less than a complete overthrow of Peruvian society, and he built a dedicated and brutal band of insurgents around him. By his accounting, if you weren't a member of his "Shining Path" movement, you might very well be an enemy. Insurgents decimated villages, and visited others with a terror that demanded obedience.

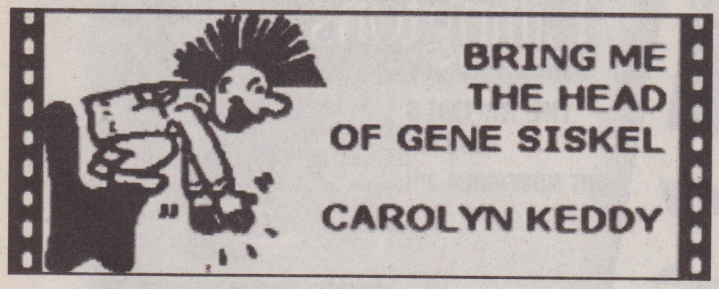
Under the Shining Path, the mountainous regions of Peru turned into a killing ground. The government might still have regarded the threat as minor if not for a switch in revolutionary strategy: the Shining Path now began bombing attacks in comparatively well-to-do urban Lima, inviting reprisals from an increasingly frustrated military. In one interview, a woman still speaks with pride about her role in the movement; in another, a reformed fighter speaks with palpable regret when he recalls the first man he had to kill.

The main problem for government forces was to distinguish friend from foe (reflecting a similar problem the US had in Vietnam). When Alberto Fujimori was voted into power, he quickly abrogated powers of government and began his own campaign of terror—but with a few changes. Even after

Shining Path members were captured, Fujimori used the pretext of terror to sustain a permanent system of control over the populace. He issued massive bribes to the military and media, funneling much of the remaining money into his personal back account. Supported by corrupt members of the military and media, he all but erased meaningful opposition.

There's no really "happy" ending to a story like this, but its climax plays out a movie. Videos of the bribes—which involved obscenely large piles of freshly minted currency—pulled down the Fujimori government almost instantly. (Fujimori relocated to Japan, a free man.) After a new administration was elected, it was decided that a "Truth Commission" be instituted—a group dedicated (not unlike the 9/11 report) to unearth the truth so this kind of thing could never happen again.

Yates reminds us that democracy in Peru is at a delicate stage, and all the more so because poverty grips the poor as harshly as before. Peru has its truth, but the truth will not buy bread.



TWO HEADS ARE BETTER THAN ONE

Like every good punk rocker should be, I am completely supportive of freaks. Face it, freaks are far more interesting than average people are. **Brothers of the Head** is a mockumentary about two conjoined twin brothers Tom and Barry Howe. The boys are joined at the waist and share a liver, a condition known as Omphalopagus Twins which isone of the more common types of a very uncommon phenomenon.

Mrs. Howe died giving birth and Mr. Howe hid the boys in a remote part of England nicknamed the Head so they could live in peace. When they got older their father sold them to a rock producer Zak Bedderwick who was looking for a gimmick for his next group. Their father justified it by having the contract state that they would receive a regular salary for a year—that way they would be taken care of. The fact that the boys don't sing or play instruments was no concern. Zak puts them up in house with a musician to teach them and a manager to watch over them.

The shots of the two boys are striking. Since they are conjoined, they are always close to each other. At first, Barry seems the more subservient one. He is usually curled up to Tom's shoulder, peering out occasionally and not saying too much. Tom is friendlier, more outgoing one who gets along with the other housemates immediately. Tom starts playing guitar and after failed attempts at also playing guitar Barry becomes the singer. Then once they start practicing music their roles get reversed. Tom becomes the sensitive songwriter and Barry the angry front man.

The gimmick works. People pack clubs to rock out with the boys. Barry finds his calling spewing hate towards everyone who has come to stare at the freaks. He rips open his shirt to reveal their connection. The crowd goes wild. Then a former groupie shows up at the band's house. She is writing a story on the exploitation of the handicapped. Barry taunts her. She begins an affair with Tom that is obviously awkward. Barry is jealous. Tom for the first time starts thinking of separation even though Barry is the weaker twin and would probably die.

Brothers of the Head is set in 1975 and the band The Bang Bang (lame name) is meant to be seen as a precursor to punk. This is a mockumentary after all. Anyone who knows anything about proto-punk bands would have a hard time accepting this assumption. This isn't the New York Dolls or The Stooges. It is a gimmick that might attract a bunch of gawkers, but I am not buying that this band would in any way have influenced punk. It is also annoying to briefly see a circle pit at one of their shows. (www.brothersofthehead.com)

Let's Rock Again! is a document of former Clash frontman Joe Strummer on tour with his last band the Mescaleros. While I am all for aging rockers to keep rockin', there is something missing from the music. It could be the anger and disillusionment of the Clash. Though more likely it is the case of getting older and getting softer. Perhaps the young kids Strummer surrounds himself with were doing too much hero-worshipping to actually contribute anything worthwhile to the music. A fellow viewer made the comment that Strummer needs Mick Jones to arrange his songs.

Let's Rock Again! incorporates live footage of the Mescaleros with behind-the-scenes antics, the most interesting of which being Strummer trying to promote an album that radio doesn't seem to want to play. He shows up at a New Jersey radio station unannounced on a Saturday trying to plug that night's show. I like the brashness of it. I would hope that Strummer did it not only because he needed to, but also because it might be fun as a famous person to drop in on an unsuspecting DJ. The DJ himself comes across as pretty clueless about the Clash. He is set to play "Should I Stay or Should I Go" presumably from a computer generated set-list and talks about how he liked that armadillo in the video for "Rock the Casbah." Strummer tells a great story about the armadillo hiding out in the bass cabinet.

The best aspect of **Let's Rock Again!** fortunately is Joe Strummer. He comes across as a sincere, honest guy who appreciates his fans and what he has done. He simply wants to make more music. Humbly he states that all he wants to do is break even with this record *Global A Go-Go*, the second with the Mescaleros, so that he can make another album. Figuring, if you don't lose the record company money, they will keep letting you make records.

This footage doesn't quite stand alone as a documentary. It is great that it exists and maybe one day it will be incorporated into a more comprehensive film about Joe Strummer. The bonus features on this DVD are a Q&A with director Dick Rude at the Tribeca Film Festival in which he answers a lot of personal questions about Joe Strummer, and full live performance of Mescaleros songs. (www.image-entertainment.com)

Almost simultaneously, **Rude Boy** has also been released on DVD. **Rude Boy** is mostly a live document of the Clash from 1978 when they were at their live peak. It is intermingled with the story of an unemployed kid Ray who roadies for the Clash on one tour and then follows them around on the next. Also included is a brief and questionable look the rise of racism and Margaret Thatcher in England. This incomplete political sideline of the film seems tacked on by the filmmakers to give the film more of a social consciousness, as if the presence of the Clash doesn't already do that on its own.

Ray spends his time collecting unemployment, working at a porn magazine stand, and getting drunk. He harasses the band about going to America to record a new album and putting politics in their songs. Joe Strummer amusedly tells him that the next album is going to be more punk and Mick Jones threatens to kick his ass.

Rude Boy is probably the best live footage of the Clash you will ever see. It is shot beautifully and catches the band at their most manic. The audiences are going wild. Mick Jones shouts at the bouncers. Paul Simonon looks so young. My favorite part is Strummer singing in the studio. He has headphones on so we can't hear the music. All we hear his vocals a cappella. His spits them out with fury and you can actually understand some of the more difficult lyrics. I would have liked to see more of that.

There are a few extras on the DVD including interviews with Ray Gange who played the main character Ray, Clash tour manager Johnny Green who plays himself in the film, and the filmmakers David Mingay and Jack Hazan. An assistant of Mingay suggested doing a documentary on punk rock and also using the Clash because they were more serious than the Sex Pistols. Hazan admits he doesn't like the Clash's music, but it was exciting being on stage with a rock band. Green says the Clash performances in **Rude Boy** are great, but the film wouldn't be in his Top 10. Ouch.

There are also some deleted scenes, a feature so you can just watch the Clash performances and some extra live performances. The most obvious thing missing is a commentary from the band members. Some of their reactions to the film would probably have been very entertaining. (www.theclashonline.com)

I am always looking for films to review. If you made one, send a copy to Carolyn Keddy, PO Box 460402, San Francisco, CA 94146-0402. If your film is playing in the San Francisco Bay Area, let me know at carolyn@maximumrocknroll.com. I will go see it.

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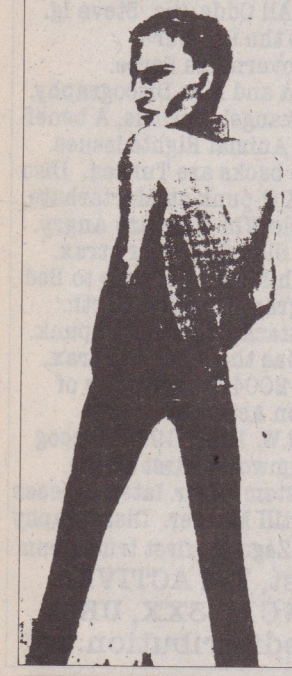

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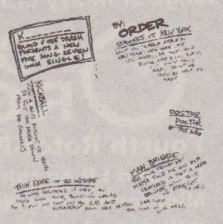

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"Their sound is a brutal fusion of crust core, hardcore and mutant ska/reggae fused with a lightning paced delivery and suitably manic vocal technique. Their own take on ska and reggae sees MSS adding their hyper energetic approach to the medium, supplementing it with a harder core and dirtier edge. Closing the album with a highpoint, the infectious 'Finally Came Down To Bombs' sets the seal on a forceful and convincing collection of cutting edge DIY punk."
PUNK & OI IN THE UK

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RECORDS

Send **two** copies of vinyl or CD-only releases (if on both formats, please send the *vinyl*) to **MRR, PO Box 460760, SF, CA 94146, USA.** We will review everything that falls within our area of coverage: punk, garage, hardcore—no major labels or labels distributed by major-affiliated distros. Please include postpaid price and contact information. Let us know where your band is from! *No reviews of test pressings or promo CDs without final artwork.* Send demo tapes and CD-R-only releases to Erin Yanke, PO Box 1113, Portland, OR 97207.

Reviewers: Tim Brooks (TB), Mitch Cardwell (MC), Rob Coons (RC), Carl Cordova (CC), Paul Curran (PC), Andy Darling (AD), Dr. Dante (DD), Sean Dougan (SD), Nic Eagle (NE), Jonathan Floyd (JF), Jeff Heermann (JH), Vince Horner (VH), Layla Gibbon (LG), Mike Howes (MH), Chris Hubbard (CS),Kenny Kaos (KK), Carolyn Keddy (CK), Ramsey Kanaan (RK), Will Kinser (WK), Elliott Lange (EL), Ray Lujan (RL), Allan McNaughton (AM), Golnar Nikpour (GN), Bruce Roehrs (BR), Ken Sanderson (KS), Martin Sorrondeguy (MS), Steve Spinali (SS), Brian Stern (BS), Stevo (ST), Ryan Wells (RW), Shane White (SW).

THE AGREEMENT – "The Loneliness Award" CD

Mebbe it's just their sense of humor, but the CD is emblazoned with a sticker that proclaims, "Includes the Hit-Single 'Leave the Light On.'" This is their debut LP, and who knows, mebbe it is already a huge hit in their native Belgium, but I somehow doubt it. I also kinda hope not. Out of eight tracks of modern MTV punk/Warped Tour pop-rock, the "hit" doesn't really stand out. Actually, none of this does. It might indeed be outstanding that four Belgians can sound so quintessentially American, but that's about it. Fans of GAMEFACE might find more than an echo in the sound and stylings, and that does have a certain appeal, I'll concede. But not much. (RK)
(www.the-agreement.com)

ALLEGED BRICKS – "Place Your Blame" CD

Whoa! I don't review this style of music very often, so this actually hit me as a surprise when I put it on. This is straight-up Oi mixed with slightly faster East Coast style hardcore. Gruff vocals spew out lyrics about drunk driving, serving jail time, hating emo kids, and so much more. And they actually do a respectable BAD BRAINS cover. Paging Bruce Roehrs! (RC)
(Street Anthem, PMB 218, 1530 Locust Street, Philadelphia, PA 19102, www.streetanthemrecords.com)

ALTERNATE ACTION / MARCHING ORDERS – split EP

Fuck! You fucking skinheads are in luck! Michael Josephson has issued a stunning new split EP on his Longshot Records. The new product is a split between ALTERNATE ACTION from Vancouver, British Columbia, and MARCHING ORDERS from Melbourne, Australia. A much-revered Vancouver skinhead, Greg SUBWAY THUG, is the singer for ALTERNATE ACTION. That fact alone ensures that you will be playing this record everyday—often with a pint of beer held aloft! This is as good as melodic skinhead music gets. ALTERNATE ACTION presents well-honed vocals and guitars coupled with barrels of venom and condemnation. The polished delivery sits on top of a massive beast seething with anger. This record is destined to become a much-coveted skinhead masterpiece! MARCHING ORDERS takes the bristling momentum initiated by ALTERNATE ACTION and takes it to new heights! These Australian skins and punks have incisive lyrics coupled with some of the best street music witnessed since MENACE played London in 1979! MARCHING ORDERS bludgeon you right between the eyes with "Traitor"—one of the most harrowing indictments of any man, anywhere! Fucking brilliant! "Nihilism" continues the absolutely perfect two-song sage. This record is fucking great! (BR)
(Longshot, PMB #72, 302 Bedford Ave, Brooklyn, NY 11211)

THE AMBER SQUAD – "Arewehavinganother-inhereorwhat!?! CD

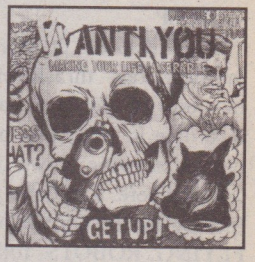
A UK mod band from 1979 doing a rootsy pub/ska thing. Not quite up to the normal Detour label quality, as this band's up-tempo stuff almost sounds like a flat CARPETTES. This does feature a known single "I Can't Put My Finger on You" from 1980. But 1980 was actually late for the mod revival, which was fueled by the *Quadrophenia* movie. For mod revival completists only. (RL)
(Detour)

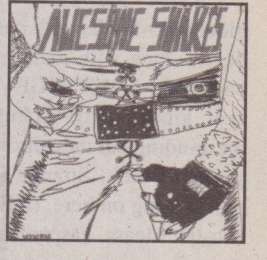
ANOTHER BREATH – "Mill City" CD

Not-so-Youth-Crew Youth Crew—modern hardcore that's angrier and harder, with hoarse and hoarser vocal shouts and more expansive pro musicianship that still ends back at shout-along breaks and mosh-able breakdowns. Personal lyrics of hope and despair with the "struggle" provide moodiness with which this style always seems to be weighted. Ironically, the Jack Kerouac quote in the center of the packaging, "When I found him in Mill City that morning he had fallen on the beat and evil days that come to young guys in their middle twenties," simultaneously describes the fan appeal of this style and my ennui with the it. That all said, this is superbly delivered, for fans of the permutations of the modern sXe-influenced hardcore style and an excellent top shelf representation of it. (KS)
(Rivalry, PO Box 5242, Concord, CA 94524, www.rivalryrecords.com)

ANTI YOU – "Making Your Life Miserable" CD

Twelve tracks (plus two unlisted covers) in about as many minutes—roughly an EP's worth of '80s retro-core thrash from this new Italian band (purportedly made up of dudes in their mid-30s). Guitar tone and barebones approach sounds like CAREER SUICIDE or REGULATIONS, but this is probably closer to TEAR IT UP or





LIFE'S HALT. Some good songs for sure, though somewhat lacking intensity. (CS)
(SOA, via Oderisi da Gubbio 67/69, 00146 Roma, ITALY, www.soarecords.it)

THE APE-SHITS / THE GASH – split EP

Oh, honey to ears. The APE-SHITS rock—no messing around, 3-2-1-go. BASEBALL FURIES in the hook department with some of that distorted razor bald racket of the FINAL SOLUTIONS. Boasting members of DIRTY SWEETS and the RECLUSIVES and an unmistakable Chicago sound, even though these cowboys hail from Austin. Now back in the studio and give me more. THE GASH brings up the rear with a great blown-out REDS sound. Loud and over-driven without loosing the tunes, and Christ the tunes are here. Including members of the MARKED MEN, the WRIST, and the WAX MUSEUMS, and unfortunately already broken up. Texas delivers again. The best split of the year. (SD)
(Big Action, 360 Lexington, Pkwy S. #109,Saint Paul, MN 55105, www.bigactionrecords.com)

ARMY OF FLYING ROBOTS / KAMIKAZEE – split EP

KAMIKAZEE creates quite a ruckus with insanely fast thrash mixed with sporadic moments of crazed screamo breakdowns. The recording is pretty piss poor, but it does nothing in slowing down the wild aggression released here. And those vocals—man they are fucking harsh! On the other side ARMY OF FLYING ROBOTS follow a similar path, clashing styles of thrash, screamo, punk, and metal. Lots of aggressive time changes that brought me back to the mid- to late-'90s era of popular hardcore. Both sides are solid and worth a listen. (RC)
(Feast of Tentacles, www.feastoftentacles.com)

ATOMGEVITTER / EASPA MEASA – split EP

EASPA MEASA, from Ireland, plays gloomy lo-fi riffs with basic back and forth fast beats, along with male/female vocals. Not too bad. Next is ATOMGEVITTER; they are upbeat, kinda snotty, rockin' punk stuff—not too outstanding but they throw in some killer stoney rockin' riffs. Strange split, there is just too much going on here. (NE)
(Eastpa Measa, easpameasa@yahoo.com)

AWESOME SNAKES – "Venom" CD

Herky-jerky drum-and-bass-powered noise from two SOVIETTES. It's smart-arsed, snotty, arty, and funny. It sounds good so far, though I'm only on track two, and I must admit that the fact that there's another thirteen tracks is a little unsettling. The CD came with one of those distro mail-out info sheets that says, "Recommended if you like: the SOVIETTES, the SPITS, WEEN, snakes, things that are awesome, originality, catchy songs, humor." Can't put it better than that really… I think this might be a grower…if I can make it through the whole way I might actually start to love it, though I never found snakes particularly interesting, much less awesome, as opposed to, say, sharks or dinosaurs… (AD)
(Crustacean, PO Box 829, Madison, WI 53701)

BATTLESHIP – "To Give Not a Gift" EP

The latest missive from Oakland noise-niks BATTLESHIP is as direct a slice of art-damaged (the good way) punk rock as you're going to get. Two to-the-point, propulsive broadsides that bore into your skull with repetitive rhythms and electroshock guitars. This is what BATTLESHIP sounds like just prior to that moment when self-destruction takes over. (AM)
(Double Negative, PO Box 3266, Oakland, CA 94609, www.doublenegativerecords.com)

BELLMER DOLLS – "The Big Cats Will Throw Themselves Over" LP

Haunted and primitive rockin' that channels the eerie sounds of the long deceased CRIME AND THE CITY SOLUTION and THESE IMMORTAL SOULS, with occasionally CULT-like vocal crooning. "L'Condition Humaine" is a dark, epic and scummy exploration of the aforementioned, the guitar leads are particularly standout on this track, creepy as hell, interspersed with epileptic rhythm hand picking, like the original gangster: ROWLAND S. HOWARD. Jim Sclavunos, TEENAGE JESUS AND THE JERKS and NICK CAVE AND THE BAD SEEDS drummer, produced this recording, and regardless of how little or how much "production" was truly required, this recording is solid and a very good listen. (BS)
(Hungry Eye, PO Box 20403, Tompkins Square Stn, New York, NY 10009, www.hungryeyerecords.com)

BE MY DOPPELGANGER – "Rock 'n' Roll Genius!" CD

With four hit dice and an armor class of five, doppelgangers will fuck you up if you're not careful. Anyway, these particular ones appear friendly enough, being four young men from the bluegrass state. I knew this was going to be good even before I played it—THE BOYS shirt and the SCREECHING WEASEL patch on the cover gave it away, and both those bands are as good a reference point as any. Good catchy punk rock that walks the line between snotty '77-style punk and pop punk. Gnarly riffing, bad-attitude vocals, and well-used back-ups set the tone, and along with some pretty good songwriting make this disc a certain keeper. They remind me of a much rougher, tougher WESTON. I'm sure they kick ass live too, so if you're ever in Kentucky... (AD)
(Bitchin' Riffage, 416 Clay St. Henderson, KY 42420)

BLACK FRIDAY '29 / DEATH BEFORE DISHONOR – split EP

On one side we have two new songs from Boston's metallic mosh masters DEATH BEFORE DISHONOR. The riffs are competently played and the vocals are pissed. On the other side there is Germany's BLACK FRIDAY '29, who contributes three songs of faster, more modern straight edge hardcore not unlike ALLEGIANCE or RIGHT BRIGADE. (CC)
(Bridge Nine, 35 Congress St., Salem, MA 01970, www.bridge9.com)

BLACK TAX / HEROIC DOSES – split CD

Two UK bands share this split CD. BLACK TAX is modern emo-damaged hardcore: complex blasts with "passionate" screamed vocals, quiet melodic part thrown in here and there, etc. To their credit, though, I would say they're more straightforward than the majority of bands in this style. HEROIC DOSES has a similar modern sound but is much less spastic and leans more towards the melodic AVAIL/HOT WATER MUSIC side of things. Each band does four originals and one cover of the other's song. (CS)
(Hollow Soul, www.hollowsoulrecords.co.uk)

BLOTTO / MODERN MACHINES – split EP

The MODERN MACHINES are one of the best things the Midwest has going right now…shit, probably ever. How can you not love a band that can write a song involving HICKEY and *Star Wars*? You can't not, that's how. Plain and simple and grammatically fucked up. The MODERN MACHINES have this way of sticking all the best Midwest bands from the past in a blender and adding in their own mystery sauce to make the most delicious punk smoothie you've ever had. I heard Jamba Juice offered them an unreal amount of money for the recipe and rightly so. BLOTTO from Japan is criminally underrated, criminally far away, and criminally devoid of a full-length. Damn criminals. With all due respect to every other band in Japan…BLOTTO is the best fucking band in Japan right now. Gritty pop punk with an awesome sense of melody…sorta like if Jake Burns listened to the REPLACEMENTS. If you haven't heard them before, prepare yourself for a future that will have you scouring the earth for distros that carry their 7"s. Yoichi from Snuffy Smile knows what's best for you. If you see the name Snuffy Smile just get it. Nine times out of ten you're going to get an awesome split 7" with one of the best bands from the US on one side and the same

from Japan on the other. (ST)
(Snuffy Smile, 12-A Kamikousaicho, Shichiku, Kita-Ku Kyoto 603-8117, JAPAN)

BOOTER / CHACHI ARCOLA / KRAP NEK / PAVLOV – split 2xEP

Four French bands with most lyrics in French. I can't tell what CHACHI ARCOLA is about—somewhat emo but uninspired. BOOTER's sound is vaguely straight edge. Discordant, slow, somewhere between an '80s DC sound and the grunge sounds of QUICKSAND. PAVLOV has a slightly emo sound that's mostly slow and melodic. KRAP NEK, well, the two tracks from this band might have rescued this release from the cut-out-bins. Fast, rippin' crusty hardcore which borders on powerviolence. Scratchy female vocals that shred. (MH)
(Kawaii, 38 Rue Docteur Dubois, 58110 Chatillon en Bazois, FRANCE)

BOXED IN – "2001-2005" CD

Raging fast UK hardcore/punk with uncompromising, blown out, and frenzied vocals complete with intelligent, engaging and well conceived lyrics (a rarity these days!). Now that the pain of this world has become too great, a convenient collection of all their crucial vinyl jams all on one very listenable disc, just in time. Get off your fucking knees and pick this up. (BS)
(Flat Earth, www.flatearth.free-online.co.uk)

BULLCOCK – "Hog Nuts" CD

Dear *MRR* shitworkers and readers, I apologize for wasting space in this magazine reviewing this CD. Face it, anyone who is going to buy a CD with a picture of the hind legs of a pig with giant balls on the cover isn't really going to care whether or not I like it. This is suburban heavy metal. It encompasses every cliché in rock 'n' roll: drinking, getting high, and strippers. It is pretty sad when I can look at a song title such as "If This Whiskey Was a River" and know immediately that the next lyric has to be something about drowning. The song itself is a GUNS N' ROSES piano style ballad. The other songs are faster paced, but have equally cringe-inducing titles such as "Better Safe Than Sober" and "I Think That Stripper Likes Me." Ugh. (CK)
(Static, 17215 Mack Ave, Detroit, MI 48224, www.staticrecords.com)

CALIFORNIA LOVE – "Can't Waste Death" 12"

Don't let the title fool you, this is all about the hate—a dozen blistering tracks of full throttle, out-for-blood power violence that borders on all-out grind in speed and intensity. This sounds weird but I thought of a cross of UNRUH and Y—they've got a super evil tone that reminded me of the former and the non-stop speed of the latter. All songs are real short; with a bitchin' recording and a 45 RPM pressing the sound on this is killer. With members formerly in TALK IS POISON, A SLEEPING IRONY, and (concurrently) LOOK BACK AND LAUGH, these guys got the skills to deliver the goods. Favorite song title: "March of the Useless." Definitely a crowd pleaser. (EL)
(California Love, PO Box 3103, Berkeley, CA 94703)

CALIFORNIA REDEMPTION / START THE PANIC – split CD

Punk rock split release number 13,346 and counting, this one featuring two bands from Southern California. START THE PANIC plays scrappy noisy-but-melodic fast punk which is a lot of fun—perfect slam dancing music. CALIFORNIA REDEMPTION has a harder, less discordant sound that owes a lot to old no-fuss spiky East Coast bands like the PIST and SUBMACHINE. Both of these bands have a definite sense of what punk should sound like and carry it through, elevating this above the sea of mediocrity out there. Recommended. (AD)
(Let Them Eat, www.lterecords.com)

CAPITAL – "Signal Corps" CD

With this nine-track debut release, Long Island's CAPITAL (ex-SILENT MAJORITY) manages to breath life into the seemingly tired formula of '90s melodic East Coast hardcore. Equally angry and catchy, they know how to write a song and deliver it with energy and intensity. I'm surprised. 99 percent of the bands that play this style of hardcore are so banal and uninspired that I feel like plugging my ears with used condoms…somehow these guys pull it off. (VH)
(Iron Pier, PO Box 279, East Setauket, NY 11733)

CARBONAS – "Lost Cause" EP

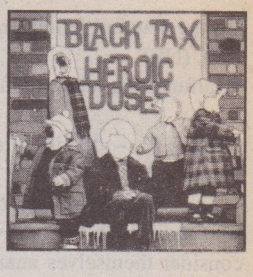
On the subject of live records, this label is doing a serious reclamation project on the concept as a whole; these things are almost like Southern-fried *Peel Sessions*. The CARBONAS are one band currently strip-mining the feel and soul that underly KBD-obsessed '70s punk without merely aping the form. Not much to say about this one—another mandatory purchase for those of you out there who like the punk rock with the yelling and the guitars and the rockin' melody and whatnot. (RW)
(Rob's House, www.robshouserecords.com)

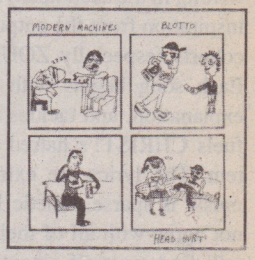
CAREER SUICIDE – "Anthology of Releases 2004-2005" CD

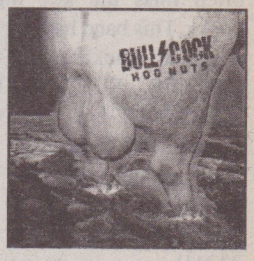
On the elaborate poster-like insert there's a picture of a shirtless dude (member of CAREER SUICIDE probably?) with a pukka shell necklace looking through the *MRR* record collection, green tape and all. *Intense*. Anyway, my favorite thing this band has recorded is still the *SARS* EP, but this is a rad compilation of everything from the split with JED WHITEY to the *Invisible Eyes* 12", plus unreleased tracks. You've probably heard CAREER SUICIDE at this point, or seen them play, but in case you haven't, it's a bunch of Canadians playing early '80s SoCal-styled thrash. They are pretty fucking awesome and this is a great document of that fact. (LG)
(Deranged, www.derangedrecords.com)

CEREMONY – "Violence Violence" CD

This band sounds just like INFEST. Just kidding bro! It's fucking fast though, not in a powerviolence way but in a fast-ass hardcore way *mannnnnnn*! I'm stoked on this shit, it's fucking pissed off hardcore, no bullshit. Direct and to the point, no fucking lame breakdown, sing along, two-step parts in every song just *fast fast fast* and pissed! Strained vocals, great production, and nice dudes ta boot! This is Bay Area hardcore—*rep yo' shit, bro!* Oh yeah, this







has the new full-length and the debut 7" on it as well. (NE)
(Malfunction, www.malfunctionrecords.com)

CHRIST! – "Will We Always Be Blind Idiots?" CD

Twelve tracks of melodic anarcho-punk from Chicago. I don't actually know if these folks consider themselves anarchists, but everything from the subject matter, to the layout, to the writing in the accompanying booklet, derives its inspiration from the output of CRASS and their cohorts (especially ZOUNDS or THE MOB). Each song begins with a short spoken-word explanation, and tackles a specific subject that fuels CHRIST!'s hatred for the capitalist system. The lyrics are extremely direct and the music is sparse, kinetic DIY punk. You might not agree with all of their lofty ideals, but you will find yourself singing along. I understand they distribute this CD for free to anyone that wants it, so you can't go wrong at that price… (AM)
(Christ!, 4147 N. Greenview, Chicago, IL 60613, www.christtheband.com)

CLOAK AND DAGGER – "Daggers" EP

Absolute ripper of a disc. Total BLACK FLAG worship, but in the best possible way. The guitars especially have Ginn dripping off them. While a lot of the new breed of retro rockers have the speed and the "sound," they often miss the key ingredients: anger and hooks. This band has bag loads of both and isn't afraid to fucking use 'em. As current as CAREER SUICIDE or GOVERNMENT WARNING, but with enough of the retro garage snarl to keep all the kids happy. Keep your peepers peeled for some top ten appearances from this lot. (TB)
(Grave Mistake, PO Box 12482, Richmond, VA 23241)

CLOROX GIRLS – "Eva Braun" EP

One of a slew of current bands that are playing punk rock in a very traditional, melodic '77 style; these guys do it extremely well. Because of this, they remind me of the BRIEFS, though they don't necessarily sound much like the BRIEFS. This has definite foot-tap appeal. Good shit. (KK)
(Burning Sensation, c/o Thijs Van Der Spank, Regulus 25, 2221 MT, Katwijk Aan Zee, NETHERLANDS)

THE COME N' GO – "2" CD

Decent garage punk stealing generously from the ROLLING STONES and the OBLIVIANS, but keeping the beat fast and rollicking. Then they do a CREEDENCE CLEARWATER REVIVAL cover complete with long rambling instrumental interlude that loses me. Luckily there is a fast forward button on my CD player. (CK)
(Voodoo Rhythm, Jurastrasse 15, 3013 Bern, SWITZERLAND, info@voodoorhythm.com)

CONVERSIONS – "Tiny Pieces" EP

Tricky stop-start hardcore, with one foot in the screamo world… No, no, don't panic, I mean that in the best possible sense, the way that the best parts of the SHIVERING were screamo without being wimpy in the slightest. Actually this sounds like a less accomplished SHIVERING without the quiet noodling parts. I dig it. (TB)
(Namennayo, jesse@thac0.org)

COUNTDOWN TO ARMAGEDDON – *[need title]* EP

OK guys, here I am over a minute into the first track and I am still waiting for this long instrumental to *kick in*. Oh, wait, maybe it is kicking in and it's so slow and boring I don't realize it. Ah, here we go! They finally whip out some speedy crust-style punk with deep growling (duel) vocals. The recording itself is really lo-fi and that lends to the fact that this EP is relatively unimpressive. I mean, it isn't horrendous by any stretch of the imagination, but it just didn't do much for me. Maybe if the recording weren't so quiet sounding this would be a much stronger release. (RC)
(Aborted Society, 1122 East Pike Street #377, Seattle, WA 98122-3934, www.abortedsociety.com)

COWARD / GASMASK – split CD

In the '80s there was an obscure but beloved Japanese punk label called Skeleton records that released a handful of over-the-top crazy and noise-drenched EPs, and the COWARD and GASMASK records were two of those EPs. Skeleton bands would make even CONFUSE fans blush with their primitive, distortion-heavy bashings, and it's probably safe to say that that label had a big influence on the current crop of Japanese noise merchants. This is why it's appropriate that a few years ago Osaka's Crust War records reissued the COWARD and GASMASK EPs on a split LP, and now MCR gives us the CD version of that LP. This CD is cool because even that reissue LP is fetching collector prices these days. Anyway, this CD contains the 1985 GASMASK EP, the 1986 COWARD flexi, and some live, comp, and unreleased tracks by both bands. The COWARD stuff is a little bit more bizarre and fucked-up-sounding (and my favorite of the two bands), though both bands are so noisy that it's hard to make such distinctions. I also think the aesthetic that Skeleton records have is fucking awesome—lots of crude skulls and stark graphics, making the whole presentation very striking. As with all MCR releases, stateside folks can pick this up from Sound Pollution and European punx from Agipunk. (GN)
(MCR, 157 Kamiagu Maizuru, Kyoto, 624-0913, JAPAN)

CTHUWULF / DEATH SENTENCE – split EP

I didn't look at the sleeve before dropping the needle and instantly thought '80s hardcore. Sure enough, this is the DEATH SENTENCE from Australia in the '80s. Fast, random guitar solos, and some spoken/sung sections. Why don't more bands lift this sound? They remind me of LÄRM. The only odd thing is I found myself singing, "Living in a suburban wasteland." CTHUWULF does a speedy lo-fi thrash-type sound. I don't like the guitar tone but that's probably getting too picky. I need to hunt down more music by DEATH SENTENCE. (MH)
($4 ppd: Give Praise, PO Box 494, Barnstable, MA 02630)

THEE CRUCIALS – "Live at the Mystery Spot" EP

Rob's House is fast becoming thee premier spot for live garage punk bands and their subsequent live 7" EPs—check out other Rob's House records by the CARBONAS and BLACK LIPS for proof of that. Georgian's THEE CRUCIALS are the latest in line, playing raw teen beat with snotty vocals over primitive drum bashing. The two songs are not gonna change your life or anything, but would make a fine choice for something to throw on at your next frat stomp. Good stuff. (GN)
(Rob's House, www.robshouserecords.com)

DATELESS – "Everything Could Turn Out Right This Time" CD

This CD would have been perfect on the old Mutant Pop label. DATELESS reminds me at times of a more poppy TEEN IDOLS combined with a little BEATNIK TERMITES to give this reviewer a pleasant surprise. A winner. (JF)
(Dateless, www.myspace.com/dateless)

DEEP SLEEP – "You're Screwed" EP

Baltimore's DEEP SLEEP is a new band that plays a great blend of Midwestern snotty punk mixed with early '80s Southern California hardcore. The guitar tone on this is fucking awesome, and the vocalist has a very ADOLESCENTS vibe going. I should mention that the graphic layout of the sleeve is top notch. Another good job by Grave Mistake. Highly recommended! (CC)
(Grave Mistake, www.gravemistakerecords.com)

THE DEMON SEEDS – "Have a Date With Death" CD

Oh fuck, can I get a least one good CD this

month? Ah well. Boring predictable '60s-inspired garage. Bringing nothing new to table and totally devoid of the reckless sloppy energy and monster hooks that attract me to this scene. Dull beyond dull; if your band was a horse I'd shoot you. (SD)
(Necro-Tone, www.myspace.com/demonSeeds)

DESTRUCTORS666 – "060606" CD

Current incarnation of the old early-'80s UK punk outfit, releasing the most pointless format of all time: the two-track CD. Back in the day I always thought they were in the "less than stellar" camp with bands like the DISRUPTERS and RABID; unmemorable UK82 gear (although I seem to remember their *Exorcise the Demons of Youth* LP being OK). This, however, stinks—pretty much standard fare for old reformed bands from a million years ago, this having the added insult of an "amusing" B-side "Neighbor of the Beast." Jesus. Pretty crap, slightly metallic plod punk. Hang up yer boots guys. Please. (TB)
(www.destructors666.com)

DIOS HASTIO – "Kerosene: The Lost Tape 1998-2205" EP

DIOS HASTIO from Peru was around for some time and had quite a few releases; this apparently was some unreleased stuff, as you can guess from the title of the EP. This is lo-fi hardcore—I was hoping it wasn't going to be grind and I am relieved to say it is not. The vocalist has a nice, desperate, and urgent style to his singing and he sounds like he really means what he is screaming. His voice reminds me a bit of ATAQUE FRONTAL's singer, Cool record—fans of Latin American hardcore punk might want to check this out. (MS)
(Vicious Interference, PO Box 2331, Land O' Lakes, FL 34639)

DIRTY WORKS – "Biscuits and Liquor" CD

Plodding, uninspiring one-riff un-wonders peddling the dullest Confederacy of Scum-type rock that I've heard in a long time. Crap on top of a steamy shit that nestles high on a pile of stinky turd. What more can I say? (SD)
(dirtyworks13@gmail.com)

DISASTER STRIKES – "Liberty Toast" CD

A mish-mash of musical styles here—most prominently the tense edge of HUMAN INVESTMENT, but with traces of noodly screamo, metal, and even JAWBREAKER at times. Unfortunately any bite whatsoever is sucked utterly dry by shit production. It's too bad this CD sounds like it was downloaded from a compressed file on the Internet, because lyrically these guys are pretty right on. (CS)
(Alternative Tentacles, PO Box 419092, San Francisco, CA 94141, www.alternativetentacles.com)

DISCHARGE – "Beginning of the End" EP

Ahhhh, the band that spawned a million clones. The band that created its own sub-genre. I absolutely *love* DISCHARGE and have almost forgiven them for *Grave New World* (I said almost). Their early records are a must for anyone calling themselves a punk rocker. This disc is a new recording with the original backline fronted by Rat from the VARUKERS. Is it good, I hear you bleat? Sure, it's good. Is it classic DISCHARGE? Not really. It kind of sounds like the bloke from the VARUKERS singing for early BROKEN BONES. To be brutally honest since this band broke up in the '80s, their sound has been taken by plenty of other young whippersnappers who have built on it and created something much bigger. If you are a diehard fan you won't be totally disappointed, but it ain't no *Realities of War* that's for sure. (TB)
(Thunk, Unit 1, Cumberland Dairies, Middlewich Street, Crewe, CW1 4EA, UNITED KINGDOM)

THE DIVEBOMB HONEY – "Something's Goin' On" EP

There really is a lot to like about this record. It's a one-sided 7" with two tracks. (This allowed the band to save a couple of bucks.) It's got female vocals. It's extremely catchy new wave/punk rock that reminds me of the EPOXIES, the DEADBEATS, and BILL NELSON'S RED NOISE. The last reference may be obscure, but it's accurate. Go online and check it out if you don't believe me. The bottom line is that it's a fucking great record. (KK)
(Exploding Toe)

DOG ASSASSIN – "Imperial States of America" EP

Hell yes! These leftist political punks from Sparks, Nevada, wear their opinions on their shirtsleeves! This frantic UK82-style punk rock is the perfect vehicle for these young men to rail about homophobia, animal liberation, and the war machine. The music is strong and committed. The thoughts are fully constructed and the lyrics quite poignant for these times. This is a good record. (BR)
(Spacement, c/o Joe Feguson, 269 Wonder St., Reno, NV 89502, www.spacementreno.com)

DRUNKEN BOAT – "Made in Oregon" CD

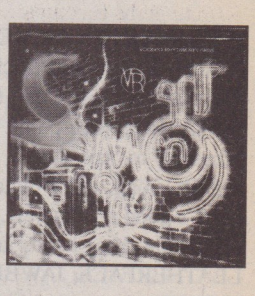
You know, I am not sure what to call the sound these days that is a little early-'90s Lookout, a little mid-'90s FYP/HICKEY, and a little bit of late-'90s No Idea, but I like it. DRUNKEN BOAT plays this style of music, they play it well, and I like. (JF)
(1-2-3-4 Go!, www.1234gorecords.com)

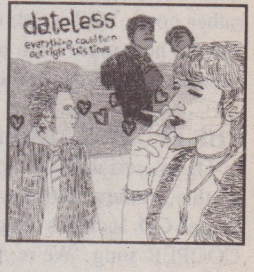
DRY-ROT – "Permission" EP

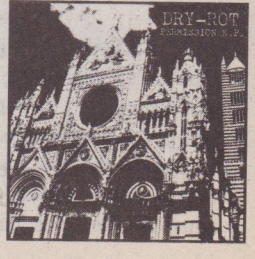
Not the old sludgy band, this is a different one and this EP starts off with loads of energetic, fast, and chaotic hardcore. Not too clean and loose enough to keep me interested. We have six tracks on side A that are pretty cool, and only one song on side two that I am assuming is a joke track—it sucks, it sounds like an alternative band, with psychedelic effects and all. It seems like DRY-ROT could be fun to watch live. (MS)
(Cold Vomit, www.coldvomit.com)

EDDY CURRENT SUPPRESSION RING / STRAIGHTJACKET NATION – split 45

Two Aussie bands bust out one cover tune each, and their own "cover" of the covers' record covers too. EDDY CURRENT SUPPRESSION RING covers the PAGANS' cover of the CHOIR's "Boy Can I Dance Good" and STRAIGHTJACKET NATION (just called STRAIGHTJACKET on the record cover) covers the SAINTS' "I'm Stranded." STRAIGHTJACKET NATION set the bar pretty high by covering one of the greatest songs of all time,







but they actually pull it off by doing it in their own style rather than trying to imitate the original. ECSR picked a song that not everyone knows; it's a good rocker that would be pretty hard to screw up, and they don't. Now I wanna hear more originals by both of these bands! (PC)
(Straightjacket Nation, PO Box 239, North Carlton, VIC 3054. AUSTRALIA, straightjacketnation@gmail.com)

ENDGAME / MOVEMENT – "Split LP" CD

Aah—beards and trucker hats! Emo! Emo! Retreat! Retreat! Is this the new pop-punk/garage/streetpunk or what? I am not ashamed to say that I like a HOT WATER MUSIC song, can't remember the name of it, but it's good nonetheless, and I like some of the bands that these bands are influenced by, be it LEATHERFACE, JAWBREAKER, or CRIMPSHRINE…but something has always struck me as really phoney-baloney about the whole emo thing. Not sure what it is…maybe I'm just a jaded old fuck (I used to be a jaded *young* fuck) and don't get what the kids are doing. Anyway—MOVEMENT sounds a lot like HOT WATER MUSIC, whereas ENDGAME sounds more like Revelation-type melodic hardcore schlock. (AD)
(Think Tank, www.thinktank.net)

ENEMY ROSE / MERCY KILLERS – "...And to Become One" CD

As far as I can ascertain, the MERCY KILLERS are Irish, and ENEMY ROSE are German. But I could be wrong. Regardless, they present four tracks apiece, and rather fine they all are too. Both bands draw heavily on the likes of the DAMNED, HEARTBREAKERS, DEAD BOYS, GENERATION X, TSOL...you get the drift. The MERCY KILLERS lean more towards the Goth end of that spectrum, a la ALKALINE TRIO, whereas the Krauts tile towards the HANOI ROCKS end. But, it's all rather good. Well worth checking out, and I'm keen to hear more from both. (RK)
(I Scream, www.iscreamrecords.com)

THE EPOXIES – "Synthesized" CDEP

The merciful reissue of the first two singles by this Portland, OR, neo-new wave punk band on one CD. Includes the great new wave ALICE COOPER song "We're All Clones." You know the songs, now finally own them. (RL)
(Dirtnap, www.dirtnaprecs.com)

ERASE ERRATA – "Nightlife" LP

I haven't really liked this band since their demo. Seriously. I'm not even saying that just to be a pompous asshole, but…uh, yeah. Seeing them play in that era was really exciting and I felt like something was actually happening—not just another rock band going through the motions. They had this rad energy, the way they interacted with each other on stage, the music shooting out in jolts and shudders, like small unexpected earthquakes. They kind of lost me in the Pitchfork Media indie rock wilderness and I haven't really listened to their music since then. So, while I probably wouldn't have heard this record of my own accord, I am kind of digging it. It's got this kids-running-wild-in-the-desert feel to it; post-apocalyptic like an early '80s teen movie, perhaps *Over the Edge* or *Suburbia*. The lyrics are politicized and seem isolated—the city after the war—except they're talking about what's happening now: our fake consumerism freedom to disguise our lack of true freedoms. The music isn't as reminiscent of LILLIPUT/SCISSOR GIRLS as it was before (they lost a member, guitarist Sara Jaffe), but this is a great record. It's energetic, paranoid, jumpy, and punk, and somehow pretty and ugly at the same time. I imagine teenage girls finding this, perhaps because of the spooky but hip-right-now owl cover, and taking it home and making something new for themselves as a result. (LG)
(Kill Rock Stars, www.killrockstars.com)

EYE OF JUDGEMENT – "The New Crusade" CD

Vegan sXe metalcore. I really don't know what more to say, 'cept I don't like this. The spoken word track is enough to make me laugh…yeah dude, say "fuck" one more time and maybe I'll take you seriously. But hey, the guitar player is good. "Just trust me, if I wanted to do drugs, I would / But I don't wanna do fucking drugs, because that shit fucks you up beyond belief." That should be enough for you to know if you'd be into this. (MH)
(New Eden, PO Box 11055 Costa Mesa, CA 92627)

F-UNITS – "Reject on Impact" CD

"Reject on Insertion" would have been better for this bad melodic punk band with a third rate Billie Joe on vocals. There is already one GREEN DAY and we don't need another. (JF)
(www.f-units.com)

FESTA DESPERATO – "Nov Babylon" EP

Straight-up crust from the Czech Republic. There are a few nods to the Swedish hardcore sound, but mostly they stick to the formula. In the photos of the band I see a DISCLOSE T-shirt and a DISCHARGE T-shirt, which gives you a good idea of where they are coming from. I really liked lyrics, such as the track "With Warranty," which is a unique take on consumerist society. (MH)
(PO Box 107 Na'DrazNi' 23, 591 01, CZECH REPUBLIC)

THE FIRST STEP – What We Know LP

I have been buzzing about this record for what seems like the last two years, and it was well worth the wait. After a full breakup and multiple lineup changes, THE FIRST STEP has returned to bring us twelve awesome songs of unrelenting positive hardcore. As compared to their last EP, they offer a little less YOUTH OF TODAY and a lot more MINOR THREAT. Produced entirely by Walter Schreifels, everything about *What We Know* screams traditional straight edge hardcore, whether you're talking about the Dischord-delivered guitar riffs, or the urgent vocal delivery reminiscent of a lot of the early Revelation bands. The drum and bass tones are perfect for this style, making it sound like they are playing in my bedroom. People who can't get past the lyrical content of such bands like 7 SECONDS and INSTED will probably find Stephen's lyrics a little contrived and redundant, but I feel that they are a great fit with the music. The layout is done well, though I wouldn't have gone with a live photo for the cover. A minor gripe really when compared to an otherwise great full-length. (CC)
(Rivalry, www.rivalryrecords.com)

THE FOUR SLICKS / THE PNEUMONIAS – split EP

A split EP by two French rock 'n' roll bands. The PNEUMONIAS have a slightly more primitive vibe than the FOUR SLICKS, who are full bore car-lovin' greaser types. The PNEUMONIAS almost sound like they wouldn't be out of place playing a show at Max's Kansas City, especially on the first song, "So Gamma Units," which is enjoyable in a herky-jerky sort of way. The FOUR SLICKS are a bit *too* slick for my tastes—this kind of overdriven Gearhead-style rock has never seemed that punk to me—though they do their sound well. (GN)
(Frantic City, 31 Rue Arvede Barine, 17000 La Rochelle, frantic-city@hotmail.fr)

FROM THE GROUND UP – "Words Can't Explain" CD

Vermont's FROM THE GROUND UP plays competent modern melodic hardcore in the vein of BANE and KILLING THE DREAM. Not bad for what it is. (CC)
(Round Two, 25 Charleswood Drive, Pittford, NY 14534)

FUCKED UP – "Dangerous Fumes" EP

Ah, FUCKED UP. So much ink has been spilled about them in the past few years that I hardly know what else I can add. So instead of too much editorializing, I'll just get to the work of reviewing the two songs on this record. "Dangerous Fumes" is a great song in FUCKED UP's signature hypnotic mid-tempo hardcore style. I totally dig the guitar noodling at the end, and Damian's vocals are awesome as

always. On the flip, "Teenage Problems" has the sort of poppy feel of their *Triumph of Life* EP. The chorus is super catchy, but this song doesn't quite rank up their with "Police" or "Generation" as a stone classic. Verdict? This is another good record from this band who, despite all of the hype and all of their trying, has not quite managed to make everyone hate them just yet. (GN)
(Deranged, 1166 Chaster Rd, Gibsons BC, V0N 1V4, CANADA)

THE GOONS / LEGBONE – split EP

Hold on to your jockstraps you fucking hillbillies! THE GOONS are the kind of ne'er-do-wells your mother told you to stay away from! They churn out some unrepentant bad-music-for-bad-people! They have harnessed the half-eaten corpse of the CANDYSNATCHERS and hooked it to the RANDUMBS' hell-bound train. THE GOONS play really good journeyman rock 'n' roll with absolutely no redeeming social value. I'll drink to that! On side two you will hear LEGBONE extolling the virtues of beer drinking in Ohio. The alcohol helps these punks cope with daily pressures at work and failed relationships. LEGBONE says, "I don't like people looking at me!" and has words that are heartfelt. THE GOONS, however, smash you on the head with fucking guitar rock. Yes. (BR)
(Goons, www.thegoons.com

GUNS N' ROSA PARKS / IN DEFENCE – split EP

GUNS N' ROSA PARKS goes for the full-blown lo-fi skate-core recorded-in-a-dustbin sound; imagine if the FACTION records you have were a million times faster and pressed on mud. IN DEFENSE appears to be straight edge dudes ripping off the late '80s NYC hardcore sound (MURPHY'S LAW, etc.). They seem to have been recorded in the same dustbin as the flipside. Neither band is horrible by any means but the shitty recordings make this record a dud. (TB)
(Give Praise, PO Box 494, Barnstable, MA 02630-0494)

GUTS 'N' GLORY – "Destination Nowhere" CD

The first full-length from this veteran German quintet. They apparently all play in various other ska and hardcore bands, but driven by a lack of hair, thickening waistlines, and a love of the COCKNEY REJECTS, felt compelled to unite and fight and enter the street punk, er, market. It's actually decent, if uninspired, driving, early-'80s brick-wall oi! fare. Their hearts seem in the right place, and their brains would appear to be functioning appropriately on the (anti-Nazi) left, so it's all good. Certainly considerably better than ROGER MIRET AND THE DISASTERS, and it has a good, thick, production. (RK)
(Halb 7, www.halb7records.de)

HAPPY HATE ME NOTS – "The Good That's Been Done" 2xCD

When this Australian band was putting out stuff in the mid '80s, I thought of them as an energetic but quirky college rock band. Years later, on this collection, they sound like a punky mod-ish band with some spirited tunes. Not a complete discography as part of their Waterfront/Rough Trade LP *Out* and some b-sides are missing. If you stumbled across one of their singles in the olden days here is a good double-disc collection to really dig into. A band now doing the reunion thing. (RL)
(Feel Presents, www.happyhatemenots.com.au)

HAVE HEART – "The Things We Carry" LP

This records sucks! I wanna have a heart when reviewing this but it is just straight up weak. I had some hope for it when the needled dropped and it started out with some power, but it then fell into predictability mode really quick. I heard recently that there is a new term being used for this genre. It is called "amazing core"—now you either like setting yourselves up for serious ridicule, or you kids are just too damn full of yourselves. Nevertheless, this is a color-by-numbers crew-core record that falls way too short of amazing. I know this will undoubtedly become an epic record for some kids out there; the merch will be sold, so don't sweat the bad review. (MS)
(Bridge Nine, 35 Congress St., Salem, MA 01970, www.bridge9.com)

HB SURROUND SOUND – "Mad World" CD

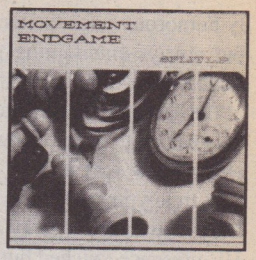
HB SURROUND SOUND, the HB standing for Huntington Beach, has to be one of the worst names in the history of punk. Now having said that, I think the HB SURROUND SOUND is accurately named, because they sound just like a band that is playing all the sounds that were the last decade of SoCal beach punk. For those of you who are thinking the CROWD or ADOLESCENTS that would be wrong. What you should be thinking is SLIGHTLY STOOPID, STRUNG OUT, PENNYWISE, and 98 MUTE, to get an idea. Now combine those bands in a blender, give it no continuity, and you have HB SURROUND SOUND. I am sure this band is going for it though, cause they have a parental warning sticker on the cover, so they don't piss off the parents. (JF)
(Skin Industries, www.skinindustries.com)

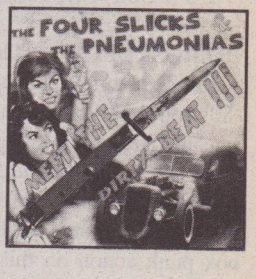
THE HEARTATTACKS – "Your Lies" EP

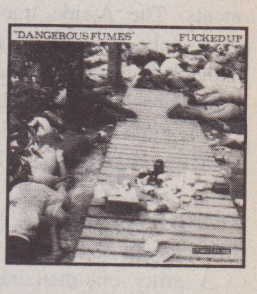
.....are these guys Japanese???? They sound like mid-'90s Japanese garage punk.....and the record sleeve looks like it's a Goner release, but it ain't..!!!!! Wherever it is that this trio is from doesn't really matter, cuz they're as tight as Greg Lowery's butthole and peehole put together as one.....(just ask his mother, that shit be tight!!!!!)!!!!! THE HEARTATTACKS may not be doing anything too original here, but they sure do make one feel nostalgic for those good old days of lo-fi, cheap gear, tons of energy, and a whole lotta attitude....!!!!!!!!! This record doesn't deserve a buttfuck but maybe a long hard cock sucking instead.....!!!!!!!!!! C'mere sugar lips.....I wanna talk to ya..... (SW)
(Plastic Idol, www.plasticidolrecords.com)

HICKEY – CD

Here it is, the one and only HICKEY full-length that originally came out on Probe Records. This is basically an exact replica of the previous release except the CD artwork and the record label logo/info has changed. As most of you already know, HICKEY's music was an endless stream of hooked-filled, catchy-as-fuck punk rock 'n' roll. Matty's brilliant stream-of-consciousness lyrics left many fans scratching their heads and yet singing along to every word. And their live shows were notorious for always being hugely entertaining. I will never forget the endless-







ly humorous stage banter, Matty's long-winded but always entertaining guitar jams, and their oddball mix of being polite and confrontational at the same time. They never failed to entertain because you never knew what to expect. So every show was as new and refreshing as the first time you saw them. As many of you know Matty Luv passed away almost four years ago. His presence touched hundreds if not thousands of people all over the world and I am really glad to see the HICKEY stuff being reissued. Look for two more releases from this label including a reissue of the *Various States of Disrepair* CD compilation and another *Various States* CD that will include "previously released stuff that wasn't on the first volume as well as some unreleased covers and songs HICKEY recorded for an LP that never came out and haven't been heard before." I cannot recommend these releases enough. Long live the Naked Cult of HICKEY! (RC)
(1-2-3-4 Go!, www.1234gorecords.com)

HOMOSTUPIDS – "The Glow" EP

Here's how to undercut charges of being an '80s-retro HC/punk band: have the singer scream like he's fronting a mid-'90s hardcore band. *Voila, au currant!* Ignoring the vocals, which are the only thing on this that bugs me, you can concentrate on the rock-solid carboard-box punk action on this frisbee, which is top notch in both the energy and clangor departments. The A-side track, "Caveman," is an absolutely excellent summertime asshole anthem. Someone tell that singer that it's okay to scale back the throat shredding and we have a classic punk 45 or three in the pipeline... (RW)
(MME, 13727 Madison, Lakewood, OH 44107)

HONKEYFINGER – "Got This Rage/Rock Me Baby"

A gritty one-man band from London. He sounds a lot like DOO RAG with his stomping beats, slide guitar and distorted vocals. Then, he throws in a "psychedelic" guitar solo. It's interesting, but lacking something. The first 100 copies come with a DVD, which I couldn't get to play on the DVD player or the computer. Alas. (CK)
(Hoarse, www.hoarse.co.uk)

HORRÖR / RAISER – split EP

The crazy thing about this EP is that even though both bands are from Spain, I would have assumed that they were both from Sweden based on their musical styles. RAISER hits it hard with manic fast Swedish-style hardcore. Copious amounts of distortion, furious drumming, and the perfect growling vocalist make for an amazingly good first effort by this band. The HORRÖR follows a similar path with some old school style Swedish hardcore that reminds me of DISARM. The rumbling drums and pronounced bass lines are really key in this style. Both bands are fucking awesome and I think this would fit right in on a Really Fast compilation from 20+ years ago. (RC)
(Oxigeno, Apdo. 40, 26080 Logrono, SPAIN, www.sindominio.net/oxigeno)

IMPERIAL LEATHER – "Antibodies" EP

More catchy, in-your-face street punk with male/female vocals from this Swedish süpergrüp. This is better than their recent LP in my opinion, mainly because this band is more enjoyable in small doses. The production is much better on this one too. Check out these lyrics! "Nature's own way of reducing the population / Seasonal affective disorder, Nordic annihilation." Fük ja! (PC)
(Profane Existence, www.profaneexistence.com)

IN NOMINE CHRISTI – "Quo Vadis?" LP

Two Germans, a drum machine, and six gallons of KY jelly... Yeah, sounds like the lead in to a bad joke, but I'm still sitting here like an idiot waiting for the punch line. All I got was 40 minutes of masturbation without a two-second hint at a climax! What punk rocker can hold out that long? I could've listened to the entire *Group Sex* LP before the vocals even kicked in on this thing! And how can these shameless *jungens* hold their heads up knowing how severely they've bastardized and exploited the CRASS aesthetic with this mind-numbing atmospheric-industrial-crust smut? (VH)
(Civilisation, c/o Oliver Schwarz, Parkstrasse 39, 89312 Gunzburg, GERMANY)

INSECT WARFARE – "Endless Execution Thru Violent Restitution (Plus More)" CD

Someone fucked up cuz I reviewed this 7" last month but I guess they didn't fuck up that bad cuz this CD has pretty much everything INSECT WARFARE has released to-date, including the *...Violent Restitution* EP, the *At War With Grindcore* EP, the split EP with HATRED SURGE, trax off the *Gulf Coast Massacre* comp, a demo, and unreleased trax from the first EP...Oh yeah, plus they throw in a CELTIC FROST cover. Goddamn, man, all that totals to about 29 songs of *grind-punk insanity*!!! (NE)
(625 Thrash, www.625thrash.com)

IRON LUNG / LORDS OF LIGHT – split EP

IRON LUNG fucking slays. Hands down they are one of the best live and recorded bands around, not to mention they tour relentlessly. Their side of this split destroys LORDS OF LIGHT, I don't give a shit what you have to say about it. It's power violence in its true form. LORDS OF LIGHT have three songs of three-man grind with screaming and talk/yelling vox. If you haven't heard of them, they feature the singer from SOCITEY OF FRIENDS. It's grindy at parts, it's slow and indie sounding at times, and artsy all in one package. (NE)
(Wicked Witch, no fukking address)

KIDD BLUNT – "Grey, Black, Grey" LP

Solid, thick, metallic punk that grooves along. Sort of like a medium-paced HOT WATER MUSIC or AVAIL. It's not something I'd listen to much but it's definitely well executed. The main turn-off for me is the vocals; they are pretty gruff and one-dimensional,but for a lot of people this would be a plus. Musically and lyrically it's pretty earnest and right down to the packaging it's obviously something that they've put their hearts into. Worth checking out. (AM)
($13 ppd: Turlough Fortune, Cayuga, Main St, Kilcoole, Co. Wicklow, IRELAND, www.kiddblunt.com)

KILLED BY THE BULL – "The Princess Rides the Bull into Holy Hell" CD

This band's label sent a one-sheet (strike one) that describes KILLED BY THE BULL as "indie/punk" (strike two). Their sound is passable mid-tempo and punk with a country flavor (that may be strike three for you, but not for me, yet), but the vocals are just too self confident and up-front with an overly singy/emo-y inflection, which is most definitely strike three. (PC)
(Koi, 18600 S. Parkview #1836, Houston TX 77084)

KIND OF LIKE SPITTING / LEMURIA – "Your Living Room's All Over Me" LP

I reviewed another split LEMURIA was on an issue or two ago and I'm stoked I get to do it again. I'll cheat and use some of what I said before because it still applies. Shh, don't tell yourself. LEMURIA is for the most part lady-fronted pop-punk-informed rock 'n' roll. This time around they've got a little more of the indie tossed in to that rock 'n' roll. LEMURIA has some really romantic poetic lyrics that haven't made me cringe yet...which is really rare. I mean, how many different ways can you say you love/miss someone before it loses all meaning? Thankfully these three found a few more. I'm super bummed they didn't send two copies of this record in. LEMURIA is perfect summer driving music...especially if you're driving to the other half of your long distance relationship. Something I have to do soon. KIND OF LIKE SPITTING sounds exactly like I always thought they would, strangely enough. I've seen their name around forever but never actually heard them. Sort of an off-kilter and awkward style that recalls those early days when emotional post-hardcore started to melt in to indie-rock. Pretty fucking good, and they top it off with a THERMALS cover. Can't front on that. Overall another bitchin' record from Art of the

Underground, which is starting to become one of my favorite labels. They've really picked up the pace this year. (ST)
(Art of the Underground, PO Box 250, Buffalo, NY 14205, www.artoftheunderground.com)

KNOCK OUT KINGS – "The Kid's Got Hearts!" CD

Slick, melodic, emo-y pop punk in the OVER IT vein with a bit of the vocal stylings of TAKING BACK SUNDAY. Five decent tunes that have the sound down, if not the originality. (RL)
(Doll House, www.knockoutkings.net)

KORO – "700 Club" EP

Knoxville, Tennessee's KORO released a single EP in 1983. Practically since then, the record has been scarce, sought-after, and shrouded in rumors and mystery among hardcore fans and collectors. For good reason—it's astoundingly tight, a near-unbelievable mix of killer riffs, speed, and intensity that renders most every other band attempting to play hardcore, before or since, obsolete. Really, it's that good! After two bootleg versions, the EP has finally seen legit reissue, and aside from a couple minor gripes (slightly different track order, sleeve opens on the wrong side), it's a perfect job. So check it out, and stay tuned also for the upcoming 12" of unreleased KORO material from the same label. (CS)
(Sorry State, 1102 N. Greensboro Street, Carrboro, NC 27510, dlupton79@gmail.com)

KOYAANISQATSI – "Weiter" CD

This German band plays what has come to be known as melodic hardcore, a genre ostensibly influenced by punk-tinged pop bands like LEATHERFACE or DAG NASTY, and distinguished by the use of open chords and tuneful lead guitar parts, that in the hands of most bands is rarely melodic at all. The chords and leads wash over you in a torrent of too-fast drums and barked vocals, with the effect that you can barely remember what you've just listened to. I hate to rag on this band in particular because they are neither the sole nor the worst perpetrator, but they have all the trappings of melody but there's not a tune on this CD that you'll feel like humming the next day. (AM)
(Twisted Chords, Reutweg 1A, 76327 Pfintztal, GERMANY, www.twisted-chords.de)

KRIGSHOT – "Till Vilket Pris Som Helst" LP

The third LP from Sweden's KRIGSHOT is their first after the passing of original vocalist Mieszko Talarczyk. Their campaign of ultra-fast distorted MOB 47-style hardcore adds Poffen from TOTALITÄR on vocals, whose voice is a little less death-metallish screeching and perhaps truer to MOB 47's clean vocal yelps. While still ultra fast and ultra distorted, with the band's signature precise thrash drilling remaining intact and as awesome as ever, the impact of these 17 tracks is perhaps a little less aggressively manic than the band's other records. The pace slows in spots and the delivery is marked with more of a punk edge as opposed to a more metallic/grind one. Killer lyrical intent and torrential thrash waves make this one to crank loud!!! (KS)
(Communichaos Media, Box 825, 101 36 Stockholm, SWEDEN, www.communichaos.com)

KVOTERINGEN – "Vidrig Maskinell Framfart" EP

Sweden's KVOTERINGEN offers up more of their self-proclaimed "primitive Scandinavian necro punk." Listening to this, it's no shock that the band features Jallo of MEANWHILE, KRIGSHOT, and TOTALITÄR… The kicker is the drummer from MILLENCOLIN! Regardless of who's in the band, these deranged European fucks have no problem pounding out six tracks of bone-crushing Scandi-hardcore terrorism. There's a lot more low end on this recording. It sounds like they're easing away from the harsh intensity of the *Roffarens Marknad* EP towards a heavier crust sound, which is a little bit of a bummer (for me at least). Maybe it's just that this recording turned out better than their first EP and I'm a total slut for shitty production. (VH)
(Terrotten, Caixa Postal 8080, Porta Alegre, RS 90201-970, BRAZIL)

LEARN – "Life and…" CD

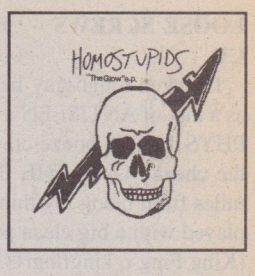
Much like their Rhode Island peers VERSE, this band merges interesting elements of contemporary hardcore along with bands from the early '90s straight-edge scene. An example would be throwing guitar leads over BANE-esque breakdowns. The first seven tracks are brand new, while tracks 8-13 were previously released on Bottled Up Records. Think MODERN LIFE IS WAR meets STRIFE. (CC)
(Malfunction, www.malfunctionrecords.com)

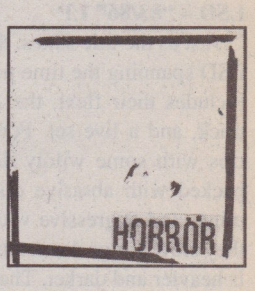
LEFT – "Jesus Loves the Left" CD

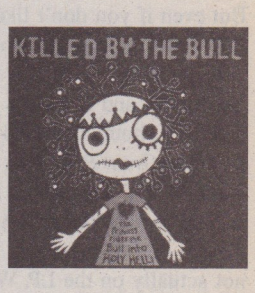
Here's a very useful reissue of the two mid-'80s mini-LPs by these Maryland-based, well, the term is *nogoodniks*, friends. Their sound is post-hardcore fast rockin' punk, still steeped in the look and feel of the early '80s but successfully straining against the tightening genre restrictions of the calcifying indie-punk circuit. Quickly, their first record (1984) is fast punk and the second one (1985) is more mid-tempo indie-punk, leaning towards a revved-up Stooges take (looka-that, they cover "TV Eye" on that one), and both would be extremely influential to today's garage-punk *moderne* if anyone really knew about them. Well, here ya go. This also includes their debut track from 1983's *The Train to Disaster* comp (on this same label!), which is merely one of the more underrated early '80s scene comps that you can still find in the $5-8 range. There are also some tracks from a reformed 1992 version of the band that are only "eh," but that would be getting greedy. The fact that these records originally came out in '84- '85 highlights the silliness, on an aesthetic level, of ending the "Killed By Death" genre at 1983; I'm all for 1985 as a cutoff, personally. There are at least ten great tracks on this, so get yer value on. (RW)
(Bona Fide, www.bonafiderecords.net)

LET DOWN – "Aggravation" EP

LET DOWN plays awesome, fast, straight edge hardcore. The vocals remind me a lot of PANIC, while musically the band is reminiscent of a more modern-sounding KNOCK DOWN. I had the fortune of seeing these guys live, and the singer was bleeding by the second song. Everything is great about this EP, from the music to the signature Dead by 23 four-color silk-screened artwork. Recommended. (CC)
(Dead by 23)







LOOSE SCREWS – "Have Another Brew" CD

Drunken tough-guy hardcore coming across as a mix of ANTISEEN's Southern rock, MURPHYS LAW's booze-crew mosh, and a bit of the cheeky Oi of THE BUSINESS. A million miles from being my thing but I guess it's well played with a big clean production. (SD)
(King Fing'r, kingfingr@hotmail.com)

LSD – "83/86" LP

Just as the title states, this is a discography of LSD spanning the time period of 1983-1986. It includes their flexi, the *Jast Last* EP, a comp track, and a live set. For the uninitiated, LSD rips with some wildly disjointed punk that is packed with abrasive distortion, hectic drumming, and aggressive vocals. On their later EP they slow things down a bit and the overall tone is heavier and darker. They get a bit experimental at times in their later stuff but I still dig it. But even if you don't like the later stuff this is still worth getting just to have the songs from that amazing flexi! The flip side is a live set from 1984 and it sounds great from beginning to end. It should be noted that the comp track is from the *Great Punk Hits* LP and is actually the band G-ZET who shared the vocalist with LSD on that particular track. And unless I am totally insane, one of the songs listed on the cover is not actually on the LP. With that said, this is a well done discography and worth your hard earned cash. This was also released on CD in Japan; unfortunately I can't remember what label it was on. So pick this up on vinyl and be glad that you did. (RC)
(Schizophrenic, 17 West 4th St., Hamilton, Ontario L9C 3M2, CANADA)

MANIKINS – "Spend the Night Alone" EP

I know a lot of people who keep singing the praises of this band but frankly I just don't see it. Simple, generic, lo-fi punk with a poppiness that lacks pop and hooks. This 45 has three songs, but the song on the A-side is off of the MANIKINS' LP, so unless you are a true fan I would skip this. Well, actually I would skip this regardless, but as I said some people sing the MANIKINS' praises. A rare miss from Mario at…(JF)
(Plastic Idol, www.plasticidolrecords.com)

MIND ERASER – "Glacial Reign" CD

These guys take it up a couple notches with *Glacial Reign*—this recording fucking slays and will leave your ears ravaged down to bloody nubs. In many ways it's a natural progression from their previous album *Cave,* as it explores some new but not too distant sounds, and the band still continues to write awesome sense-shattering riffage. Most importantly, the band has become more harsh, the playing more precise, the songwriting increasingly varied and complex while still driving; also, including a tasteful mix of classic metal, by way of bands like SODOM and HELLHAMMER. Fuck yes! (BS)
(Painkiller, 8 Burney St. #1, Boston, MA 02120, www.painkillerrecords.com)

MIND OF ASIAN – "Chinmoku No Kiri No Naka" CD

This disc from Tokyo's MIND OF ASIAN has been in continuous rotation around here for the past couple months. It's definitely one of the year's most constantly played and best hardcore/punk releases, and considering the piles of great current records around right now that's saying a lot. A ten-minute all-hits-no-filler acid bath of skin peeling fast hardcore with a lot of early '80s Los Angeles punk influence. The playing is ferocious and unrelenting, the vocals are catchy but their delivery is scathing—among the most unique and distinct full-force vocals I have heard in a long while. The musicianship and intensity is spot on and light years ahead of the herd, while the songwriting is pleasantly rooted by the assaulting force of classic Japanese punk. Awesome! (BS)
(Sound Pollution, PO Box 17742, Convington, KY 41017)

THE MIRACLE – "Not Just Words" CD

Nine songs of epic, melodic hardcore not unlike BANE or COMEBACK KID. We're talking acoustic guitar and piano intros here. So epic it makes *Conan the Barbarian* look like *Zoolander.* (CC)
(Still Life, www.stilllliferecords.com)

MISGUIDED – "How to Zeros" CD

What's worse: Southern Californian punk rock dress sense or Japanese punk rock dress sense? The debate will rage on and on… The MISGUIDED (clockwork bowler hats, bowling shirts, sleeveless T's, white creepers, et al) hail from aforementioned "SoCal" and play a speedy blend of poppy melodic and street punk with ample hooks, choruses and fancy bass licks. The title track is the best one in its unashamed simple catchiness. Not original at all but who cares? Punk innit! (AD)
(Baseline, PO Box 2541, Rancho Cucamonga, CA 91729)

MOLE FEVER – "Don't Hide the Fresh Pork" CD

Sixteen instrumental speedy/punkish tunes with titles such as "Darkness for My Sick Mole," "13th Whore Excavator," "Spiny Anteater Law," and "Roll Over Judas." Sounds like these songs were meant to be played with a singer—which leaves 'em sounding half-finished and less than satisfying. I can't tell you what MOLE FEVER is trying to accomplish, but I guess they're about halfway there. Maybe they leave a mike open for audience members? (JH)
(Nova Express, Demeure du Levant 21, Chemin des Carriéres, 71150 Chagny, FRANCE, kaisernova@aol.com)

MONDO TOPLESS – "Take It Slow" CD

Keyboard-driven frat rock from a band that has existed in one incarnation or another since the early '90s…such dedication! Ten tunes that sound good played really *loud* (I realize the volume was too low on first listening). Yeah, it's generic and cheese-packed and lyrically obsessed with weird girls and beer and the band don't look cool. *But* there are certain phases of the moon when all that I require is a 4-4 beat and some tambourine and simple tunes without funk-metal breakdowns. *Take It Slow* provides that. SAM THE SHAM they aren't, nor are they DASHBOARD CONFESSIONAL, y'know? Honest music for mooks of all genders and chronological ages. (JH)
(Get Hip, PO Box 666, Canonsburg, PA 15317, www.gethip.com)

MY PRECIOUS – "Everything So Far" CD

A 20-track collection of various releases by this female-fronted dual-vocalled screamo band from Singapore. Harsh screech-shout-screech and gnarled, screamed vocals over speeding, impressively played, progressive, '90s-ish hardcore, with inventive quiet guitar parts. The tracks from later releases get even more prog and diverse as it mixes styles and tempos, with ruthless thrash speeds almost flinging it to MELT BANANA territory. However, personal lyrics and adherence to chaotic emo-hardcore stylings put this closer to the Ebullition Records camp. The CD is filled with pictures of people in their local scene, which gives the CD a great feeling of community. Nice digi-pack packaging. Really well done and world class for the genre. (KS)
(Thrash Syndicate, www.thrashsyndicate.com)

NEVER HEALED – "Forever Never Ends" 12"

New Bay Area band with folks from LOOK BACK AND LAUGH and LIGHTS OUT. I kinda hate to play the ex-members card, but I *do* think this would appeal to LBAL fans. NEVER HEALED's sound is similar in that it's powerful, heavy, modern hardcore punk, though I would say they're more mid-paced and rockin', with bleak lyrics delivered in an almost black-metallish rasp. Eight songs on this— "Where the Crosses Grow" is definitely the standout track. (CS)
(Parts Unknown, www.partsunknownrecords.com)

NOMEANSNO – "All Roads Lead to Ausfahrt" CD

A great recording here, this is about the

tenth NOMEANSNO album I own. Despite its length and my aged and teetering attention span, this shit does not disappoint. *All Roads Lead to Ausfahrt* delivers all the patented Wright brothers grit, bile, and merciless playing that I have essentially grown up listening to. Have you ever seen or fucked to NOMEANSNO? It will change your miserable fucking life. As for the record at hand, "Mr. In Between" is a gut crushing jam of classic NOMEANSNO perfection, while "The Hawk Killed the Punk" or "I'm Dreaming and I Can't Wake Up" could easily been on *Small Parts Isolated and Destroyed* or *Wrong* with their raw and aggressive attack. It would be good to see the back catalog of this monumentally essential and (I'm going to go out on a limb and say…) genius band of crucial Canadian punk rockers start getting back into circulation. Check these maniacs out live! (BS)
(Ant Acid Audio, PO Box 1778, Orinda, CA 94563, www.antacidaudio.com)

NUEVA ETICA – "Inquebrantable" CD

Does it ever keep you awake at night just thinking about how you long for a band that sounds like HATEBREED or TERROR but with all the lyrics are sung in Spanish? And someone in the band had their name changed to XpitbullX? Well check out NUEVA ETICA and put yer fucking hoods up and bust out yer best kickboxing moves cuz you ain't got shit on xNUEVAxETICAx. (NE)
(New Eden, PO Box 11055, Costa Mesa, CA 92627)

OMAISUUSVAHINKO – "Souraan Suoneen" EP

Blistering, spirited, old-style Finnish hardcore played by people younger than the genre! This Finnish band takes the template and hits refresh, injecting nine songs with considerable energy while lifting very few influences outside of the classic LAMA/KAAOS mold of riveting, catchy hardcore. There's no low-end distortion, epic intros, pro recording, or trappings of modern hardcore—just great breaks and choruses ("Riittää! Riittää!"), scalding vocals spewing Finnish with its characteristic harshness, and fast, tinny, abrasive distorted guitar buzz driving rushing drums. Excellent EP with simplicity as its power and charm. (KS)
(Roku, PL 148, 96101 Rovaniemi, FINLAND, www.rokurecords.com)

OPEN NIGHTMARE – "Pinks of the Vintage" CD

This is a strange hybrid. Apparently it's these staunchly independent French dudes' second full-length. The music herein is as confused as their English grammar. A strange mix of operatic pop-punk, chugga metal, and straight-ahead punk. Sounds kind of weird, right? Well, it is. It's not bad, it has its moments, and, er, the spirit seems to be there. But it all kinda ends up like a picture jigsaw with several of the key pieces missing. It doesn't quite cohere. I like some of the lead guitar though. (RK)
(www.opennightmare.net)

OPTIMUS CRIME – EP

Male and female vocals, fast basic punk and thrash riffs, and a song that the vocalists talk all the way through instead of singing. (NE)
(scumbugg@yahoo.com)

ORDER OF THE VULTURE – LP

The perfect blend of Scandinavian-influenced crust and Scandinavian-influenced black metal, this Portland trio lays waste to all that is holy and healthy on this, their debut LP. Basically a straight-ahead crust outfit with heavier guitars, black metal vocals, spooky samples between songs and total out-for-vengeance, death-to-all-mankind lyrics. I didn't find this to be as immediately catchy as their EP from a year or two ago, but it's also probably faster overall than the 7", still seething with energetic hatred and thus, far from a disappointment. Definitely an album of interest for all fans of the dark arts. (EL)
(Aborted Society, 1122 E. Pike No 1377, Seattle WA 98122-3934, www.abortedsociety.com)

ORDRENEKT / VICTIMISED – split LP

In 1986 there was a bar in Rochester, NY, that booked metal bands. Gee, back then what town didn't have a bar like that? Sure, sure, I saw MOTÖRHEAD, NUCLEAR ASSAULT, CORROSION OF CONFORMITY, AGNOSTIC FRONT, etc., there but there were plenty of nights I went not knowing anything about the bands playing, sometimes not even the names. I saw a lot of good and bad speed metal and thrash bands. Well these bands remind me of that time. '86-'88 thrash metal. Two Norwegian thrash bands split a 12". From what very little I can tell, with no lyrics or info other than a few photos and the web address below, both bands are drinking, headbanging, and enjoying themselves. VICTIMISED is raw and speedy thrash, almost speed metal sounding. No frills. I can't place the sound—a little VENOM, a little HELLHAMMER, you get the idea. "Revenge" from ORDRENEKT reminds me of early EXODUS. ORDRENEKT has a more metal '80s thrash sound.(MH)
(Plata, www.platarecords.no)

THE OVERDOGS – "Pawnshop Masterpiece" CD

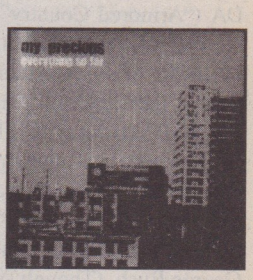
Preaching the glory of beer, porn, groupies, posers, and fucking your mom, Midwestern boys THE OVERDOGS dish out sixteen tracks of fast and obnoxiously predictable three-chord punk… Fucking nauseating! There's a band in every small town and suburb across the country that sounds exactly like this. We'd all be better off if they'd bought a few more cases of Coors instead of paying to have this recorded. (VH)
(Zero Youth, www.zeroyouthrecords.com)

PANIC – "Strength in Solitude" CD

This CD celebrates the re-uniting of one of the faster Boston hardcore bands from the turn of the millennium, who originally split in mid-2002. It compiles the two EPs on Bridge Nine Records and the demo, as well as one unreleased song. If you are a fan of TEAR IT UP, early AMERICAN NIGHTMARE, or early NERVE AGENTS, I would highly recommend looking into PANIC. (CC)
(Bridge Nine, 35 Congress St., Salem, MA 01970, www.bridge9.com)

PANIC DISORDER – "Break Neck Train Wreck" EP

I get the feeling I'm missing an insert here. Other than the label address and song titles there's no info to go along with this, which is a shame because this 7" is awesome and I could use some more ammo for a review.



After five listens back to back this is what my powers of deduction have concluded. 1) There are six songs of short, sharp, modern punk with early LA punk/hardcore tendencies that add up to some seriously heavy mix tape fodder. 2) It sounds like a punk 7" should sound: raw but not ear-piercing. 3) Cristy Road did the cover art, and that there is a mighty good seal of approval to me. In conclusion, if you can find this 7" buy it, put it on a boss punk 7" tape, and flip it over 65 times on your way to the fest this year. (ST)
(Dry Rot, 2407 N. Pierce, Milwaukee, WI 53212)

PÁTRIA ARMADA – "Genocidio Urbano" CD

These meaty-vocalled, metallic-riffed hardcore bands from the '80s must roam the Amazon like dinosaurs, as Brazil seemingly continues to unearth undiscovered brutal hardcore dating back to the '80s. PÁTRIA ARMADA ("Armored Country") dates back to 1988, but this is their first album! A new recording of 19 tracks of solid, fundamental metallic hardcore of the classic Brazilian style, a la RATOS DE PORÃO, but with a less thrash, more mid-tempo delivery—allowing the awesome brutal and throaty vocals to really sink in and guide the music. Lyrics assail poverty, street conditions in Brazil, police, nuclear war, fascists, and George Bush. (Though starting your CD with a Hitler speech probably confuses the message, the lyrics to "Bush é Hitler" are pointed enough.) Straightforward and complemented by a good open-room-y recording, making for solid pummeling! (KS)
(Punxx Cat, www.patriaarmada.com)

PETS – "Sticky Situations" 45

Having caught this band live I knew they were good, but nothing prepared me for the punch that this 7" brought. THE PETS deliver two solid songs that wouldn't be out of place in the late '70s American punk rock scheme of things, with some definite modern touches. Not only do THE PETS play some great music but the singer Dan sounds a lot like Mark Mothersbaugh of DEVO during moments. Oh, this record also features members of SHORT EYES and the FM KNIVES if you care. Great release! (JF)
(Sweet Riot, no address)

PINK EYE – "Worldwide Columbine" 12"

12" repress of the 7" EP that came out fairly recently. In case you missed it the first time around, PINK EYE is (or was?) a side-project band for Toronto folks from the FUCKED UP/CAREER SUICIDE camp. Good stuff in the *Animosity*-era COC vein, though if you ask me, a 12" version of this is a total gimmick waste of time. (CS)
(Slasher, www.slasherrecords.com)

PISSCHRIST – "Total Fucking Pisslickers" EP

There is a pretty righteous crust scene in Australia these days—from the moody PDX-influenced crust of ABC WEAPONS and SCHIFOSI to the blown out crusty thrash of PISSCHRIST, there is a bunch of cool shit coming out of that country for the black clad legions. I have to say that PISSCHRIST is my favorite of the bunch, probably because they play energetic crusty *hardcore* instead of playing up any "epic" tendencies. Vocally, they remind me of FRAMTID, though their songs don't have that *je ne sais quois* that makes FRAMTID really stand head and shoulders above the Scandi-core pack. Overall, PISSCHRIST plays above-average SOD-worship HC punk, and while they don't really break the mold, they definitely had my head a-boppin'. The cover of the record says it all as far as reviewing the music and the lyrics/politics on this record: "I heart D-beat / I heart Tofu." Cool, me too. (GN)
(Endless Blockades, PO Box 3023, South Brisbane, BC, QLD 4101, AUSTRALIA, endlessblockades_orders@yahoo.com)

THE POINTED STICKS – "Waiting for the Real Thing" CD

This CD has THE POINTED STICKS' three singles and a mix of demos and other recordings. If you have the Zulu label collection you'll need this as it has additional tracks minus the selected *Perfect Youth* tracks. (The *Perfect Youth* LP is now a complete Sudden Death release with additional tracks.) This great '79-ish Canadian new wave/pop band is best known for "Out of Luck" and "What Do You Want Me to Do?" Maybe a bit wimpy for you punk rockers but a must for the power pop types. From the scene that brought us DOA and Canada's SUBHUMANS. (RL)
(Sudden Death, www.suddendeath.com)

POISON IDEA – "Latest Will and Testament" LP

I will admit it, I listen to *Feel the Darkness* far more frequently than I listen to *Pick Your King*, so I am not at all disappointed by the fact that this record continues in the style perfected on that album. POISON IDEA released a few lackluster records between *Feel the Darkness* and this LP, their last with the inimitable Pig Champion on guitar, but this sounds like an adequate successor to that album. OK, OK, so it's not their best record. And OK, it's not totally consistent. Doesn't matter, there are still a handful of really awesome songs on here by the band that to my mind best melded hardcore punk with rock 'n' roll tendencies. I mean, this is *POISON IDEA*, and they sound really sure of themselves on this LP; there are great songs on here, but even the less great ones get by on swagger and on Jerry A.'s incredible vocals. There are also some cool liner notes written by Pig Champion himself: "Remember that punks are the old farts of today and old farts stink the worst. Hey Kids. Do it yourself—it's better!" Word up. I am stoked that this record exists, so excuse me as I cut this review short and flip it over to listen again... (GN)
(Farewell, Micha Meyer, PO Box 100205, 47002 Duisburg, GERMANY, farewellrec@plastic-bomb.de)

POLISIVALTIO – "Fukk Your Discos" LP

An unearthing of good sound-quality demos from 1983 and 1985 by Finland's POLISIVALTIO (Police State), parts of which only surfaced in the 1980s on BCT comp tapes and have been a tape-trade staples until now. Taking their name (or least the concurrent idea) from a RIISTETYT song, the 13-track 1983 demo is classic howling-vocal '80s Finnish scald and speeding melodic thrash a la RIISTETYT or APPENDIX. The 10-track 1985 demo is considerably more metallic-riff-laden, but still speeds along with the characteristic chaotic, out-of-control Finnish clunkiness, culminating in an offbeat cover of DEAD KENNEDYS' "Too Drunk to Fuck" with the lyrics mumbled in Finnish! Pass the *kilju*! The drummer and singer were later part of the much-measured metallic punk band DAMAGE , but this is more on point for the classic Finnish hardcore sound, adding no new revelations, but a great blasting time capsule. Cool. (KS)
(Assel, Groner Landstr. 48, 37081 Goettingen, GERMANY, www.assel-records.de)

THE POPE – "Live Aids" EP

Hovering in sound loops somewhere between LIGHTNING BOLT and CLIPD BEAKS, the bass sounds a lot like a keyboard, and the riffs hit like spastic Nintendo jingles. Decent but not essential, the sound here seems like it's still in the formative stages. No lyrics included, probably for good reason. (BS)
(Yosada, PO Box 1581, Boise ID 83701)

THE PROSTHETICS – "Lights Out" EP

Debut EP from this Phoenix, Arizona, band. Musically, THE PROSTHETICS' simple, driving hardcore sound is marked by angry vocals, chunky riffs, and metallic guitar-work—metallic in the old sense of the word; sounds a lot like DR. KNOW. Though the six tracks on here are all a bit too long and somewhat generic, I think the band gets by on its energy (it helps that the production's really rough), and there's some cool vocal deliveries and guitar parts here and there. Not bad for a first effort. (CS)
(1700 E. Lakeside Dr. #13, Gilbert, AZ 85234, www.myspace.com/theprosthetics)

PROTESTERA – "Grandslosa Land" EP

This is really hard for me to relate to. On one hand the accompanying booklet about the

inherent racism of the media and particularly of the Swedish state when choosing which type of "fallen reporter" to deify was really eye-opening and incredibly relevant. On the other hand TRAGEDY-style epic crust (though not quite as metal) with hints of SIGNAL LOST epic rock is not anything I would want to listen to. Reading about Dawit Issak was particularly moving; a journalist born in Eritrea who came to Sweden as a refugee, later returned to Eritrea, set up the largest free newspaper in the country, and is now as a result of his writing imprisoned without trial there… I imagine that a large percentage of the readership of this magazine would love and relate to the music of this band as well as their political activism, just not me. (LG)
(Halfabrikat, c/o D. Lonnquist, Rimsmedsvagen 36C, S-393 53 Kalmar, SWEDEN)

THE PSYCHO NUBS – "First Human Beings…" CD

Two goofy hoosiers offer up 40 minutes of catchy lighthearted pop-punk. Musically it's nothing we haven't all heard a hundred million times before, and 20 tracks… *way too fucking much*! But, for a two-piece from Indiana I gotta give THE NUBS some credit. (VH)
(PO Box 364, Richmond, IN 47375)

PUB LIFE – "Fueled by Hate" CD

Off the bat, I was predisposed not to like this by the bad, blurry graphics and corny band name. Sadly, I wasn't proven wrong by PUB LIFE, who plays average and generic rockin' street-influenced hardcore without much spark or originality. Their songs tell me that they hate hippies, rich crusties, and you, though on the other hand they like drinking. Not really sure what "Cuz I Like It" is about, but you can judge for yourself: "Shove a corkscrew in my ear / but not in my rear cuz I ain't queer / I'm a sick motherfucker I like it." Whoa. (GN)
(www.publifedetroit.com)

PYRAMIDS – "Following the Tracks, Forcing Motion Through Phases" LP

With *Following the Tracks*, PYRAMIDS make baby-sized footprints along the path paved by bands like PORTRAITS OF PAST, YAPHET KOTTO, MOSS ICON, AT THE DRIVE IN, and a zillion others. The lyrics are hard as fuck to follow, just vague and bizarre bullshit: "No thoughts and no fears as we rocket headfirst into a pitch black abyss, a hole, a tunnel so dark and unpredictable …and I'm left at ease, all care and concern devoured by the darkness into which we're headed." For the sake of leaving room for writing that actually speaks to the soul, I'll leave out any more lyrical quotes, take a stab "into the darkness," and make a guess that the bulk of these songs are about having your head shoved up your ass. Otherwise, an impeccable sound recording, well engineered, with some real nice guitar playing, and decent looking, if not excessive, gatefold cover art. File under Remembering-the-'90s-Emo-Shit. (BS)
(Paramnesia, 22 Annandale Road, Stonybrook, NY 11790, www.paramnesiarecords.com)

RADICAL ATTACK – "Priority" LP

Are these Canadians good enough to rise above a bad choice in cover art? How about if said art was another stale Mike Bukowski piece involving zombies? After spinning this a couple times, I found myself answering "yes." If slick production, hyper-fast hardcore, and a shitload of breakdowns are things you are looking for in a hardcore band, then look no further than RADICAL ATTACK. Fans of INTERNAL AFFAIRS should definitely take notice. (CC)
(Vinyl Addict, 1835 De Bourgogne, Sherbrooke, QC J1J 1B1, CANADA)

RADICALS – "Here's the Radicals" CD

From the cover I was expecting some '60s throwbacks or rockabilly (the girls in the band all dressed to the nines). Wrong. These Japanese cats are all over the map, swinging from sugary '77 pop to all out hardcore with a garage bent (a female HENRY FIAT'S OPEN SORE maybe?). It's a mixed bag but I dig it; the mangled English is especially cute. (TB)
(SDR, 3-14-10-402 Oimazato-nishi, Higashinari-ku 537-0014, Osaka, JAPAN)

RAINY DAY SAINTS – "Diamond Star Highway" CD

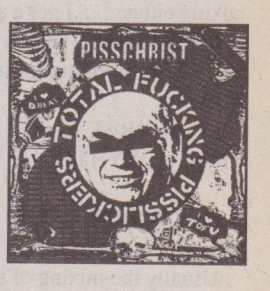
A little different from what I've come to expect from Get Hip—rather than play hidebound neo-'60s garage, the RAINY DAY SAINTS owe more to mellow/melodic pop in the PLIMSOULS or PSYCHEDELIC FURS vein. Yeah, you got yer jangly guitars, upbeat melodies, and lightweight earnest words sung in perfect harmony—but it's got some *personality*. Neato saxophone on "No Surprise," the layered guitars on "Don't Look Away," the building drone of "Nowhere Girl," and the radically reworked cover of the DEAD BOYS' "Sonic Reducer." The punks aren't going to flip their Mohawks over *Diamond Star Highway*, but weekend power poppers will find plenty here to love. (JH)
(Get Hip, PO Box 666, Canonsburg, PA 15317, www.gethip.com)

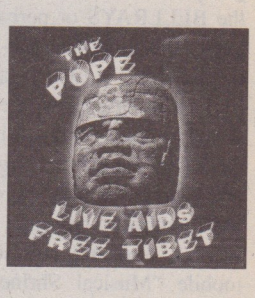
REASON OF INSANITY – "Live 09/30/04 on WFMU" EP

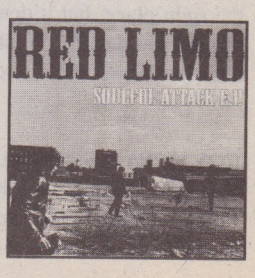
Having seen REASON OF INSANITY on this tour and listened to their 2005 LP, I was not looking forward to having to review a live ROI EP. But maybe low expectations worked in their favor, 'cause I was pleasantly surprised. I mean, this isn't the record of the year—minimal, slightly pixilated artwork, vocals are mixed a bit too high, butchered ZERO BOYS cover—but there's something about an energetic live recording that, if you can look past the flaws, really fucking rules. Anyway, fans of the band will dig this—it's limited to 300, has three otherwise unrecorded songs, and features Brandon from DIRECT CONTROL on drums. (CS)
(Tooth Decay/Cowabunga, c/o Nick Lovro, 2190 Coltonville #13, Sycamore, IL 60178)

RED LIMO – "Soulful Attack" EP

.....what a crazy fucking record!!!!!! I don't even know where to place it!!!???? These three Brooklyn boys are blowing my mind!!!!!! The first song on this four-song EP comes off like some whacked-out SoCal punk band from 1980.....the second song reminds me of those nice melodies that the late-'70s Irish punk bands were shootin' for..... the third song is very Max's Kansas City, mid-







'70s.....the forth song reminds me of the TWINKEEZ using DEAD MOON's gear.....!!!!!!!! All four of these tunes are run through a wash of really primitive recording techniques.....the guitar is a buzzing mess of fuzz and distortion and drowns almost everything else out.....the vocals are wet with tons of echo.....overall it's a fucked up overdriven mess of weird sounds.....but I gotta tell you, it sure is *great!!!!!* And that ain't just the drugs talking either.....I got a stinky finger right now and I've been sniffin' it whilst reviewing.....mmmmmmmmmmmm butthole!!!!!! (SW)
($5 ppd: Red Limo, 132 N. 1st St. #5, Brooklyn, NY 11211)

RED ONIONS – "Live at Sacred Grounds" CD

Usually the mixing of soul with modern punk gets you moderately interesting crossbreeds like the BELLRAYS or perhaps something akin to one of the name-that-last-Tim-Kerr-project-type bands; there is also usually an MC5 fixation trailing along somewhere behind in a dirty tee, scraping resin for the Big Brothers. The RED ONIONS manage to largely avoid these traps, and have put out several damn fine records that utilize rubbery bass and anthemic guitar parts without directing any stage lights onto their mobile "Musical Shrine of the Forefathers." This live EP reprises two of their better tracks, namely "Your Politics (Are Boring as Fuck)" and "Live Wire." This thing is too short, but since it's live, that's A-OK. Quickly, if you liked their debut 7", you'll dig this. (RW)
(Inka Inc., 15 Wiltshire Drive, Halesowen, W. Midlands, B63 2XU, UNITED KINGDOM)

ROUGE NATIONS – "American Ruins" EP

Melodic, poppy punk with a personal/political slant. It's been so long since I've heard a record that was even reminiscent of GROUND ROUND or early PROPAGANDHI, so this was certainly a refreshing listen in spite of it's merely ho-hum content. Wordy tunes like "Pat Robertson Death Clock" and "Planned Community" do a fine job of expressing big-time frustration on a personal level, but are delivered in a very tame way. I found their ode to ALICE BAG the most worthy of another spin, if only because they freely admit their disdain for "punk idolatry," yet simply can't resist Ms. Bag's coolness. Their hearts are clearly in the right place, but it doesn't make for the sort of slab you'd spin consistently. (MC)
(Suicide Watch, PO Box 9599, Charlotte, NC 28299)

ROYAL PAINS – " Get Punched" EP

Distorted rumble all the way from the backwoods of England, produced by one Billy Childish. Four tracks of dual male/female vocals coming off as THE FONDLED put through the ringer with a hint of—dare I say it—HUGGY BEAR and a slight wiff of BIS. Way more punk than the aforementioned but still holding desperately on to some great pop hooks and a catchiness that'll stick like shit to a blanket. Possibly the best band that's came out of the land of monocles and top hats all year. (SD)
(Jonny Cat)

RUM RUNNER – "In Guns at Cyrano's" CD

I finally figured it out. It's the banjo!! Normally, I really don't dig that whole POGUES/DROPKICK MURPHYS Irish/pseudo-folk stuff laced with punk. But this, their second LP, I believe, manages to rise above that torrid genre. And it's the banjo! The POGUES, FLOGGING MOLLY, DROPKICK MURPHYS, SWINGIN UTTERS, et al, don't have a banjo. Lots of folk bands do! Voila! Certainly, if you dig that whole Celtic punk/folk genre, you'll dig this. I don't, but this one is good. It must be the banjo. Some nifty tunes/harmonies help too. Good stuff, after all. (RK)
(Longshot, www.longshotmusic.com)

RZL DZL – "Both" CD

CD collection of their *Five* and *Demo Revisited* EPs. The former is an amusing mix of CRO-MAGS/MURPHY'S LAW-style NYHC with some early BEASTIE BOYS rap and '70s LED ZEPPELIN rock influences, the latter is more straightforward hardcore. Solid, catchy, and rockin'; good stuff with a sense of humor. (CS)
(Lockin Out, www.lockinout.com)

S41 – "S41" CD

Spastic powerviolence from Wakayama, Japan; lots of stopping and starting, jutting and darting. Ten tracks in ten minutes, most of which are blistering fast and go through a lot of changes. There is something different about this band that I can't exactly place. No blast beats or metal sounds, so it sticks to hardcore, but at the same time, they are crazy and tight like old BOREDOMS. I just listened to the whole CD three times in a row; it's awesome. (MH)
(MCR, 157 Kimiagu Maizuru Kyoto 624-0913, Japan, www.dance.ne.jp/~mcr)

SACK-O-WOES – "Whiteout" EP

Three-track EP from Holland, this band plays upbeat melodic punk with a rough edge. There's plenty of aggro attitude and chunky riffs, with group backing choruses and noisy production. For some reason it reminds of the old Maryland band THE LEFT, and other bands that (actually) played punk rock back in the mid-'80s. (AD)
(sackowoes@quicknet.nl)

SCHULZ – "What Apology" CD

When a CD lists only two members of the band in the booklet, and one of them is responsible for guitars, bass, and programming, they're already starting off on the back foot. The press info included with this takes great pains to point out that while SCHULZ is the new project of an ex-member of KMFDM, the popular industrial band, this album is not industrial. It's been a long time since I listened to much industrial music really but I certainly would hope that it's not as weak as this shit. Turgid rock guitar riffs over computer beats, with gruff spoken vocals. Someone somewhere probably likes this, but my guess is they're not reading *MRR*. I ought to mention the absolutely terrible JOY DIVISION cover and the one track near the end that sounds a bit like PET SHOP BOYS (who I happen to love). Why Joey Shithead involved himself with this I don't know, unless it was as a favor to a friend. (AM)
(Sudden Death, Cascades PO Box 43001, Burnaby, BC V5G 3H0, CANADA, www.suddendeath.com)

SEX VID – "Drugging" EP

Granted, half the records I was assigned to review this month aren't even punk… But this ripping six-song 45 is—without a fucking doubt—the best of the batch. The second the needle hits the turntable SEX VID explodes with the kind of relentlessly savage, totally pissed, no-bullshit intensity that I can never get enough of… Raw and frantic in the spirit of all my '80s American HC favorites, this band kills! I'd say more, but I just did a Google search for "Sex Vid" and got a little distracted... (VH)
(Kill Test, 530 Divisadero St., San Francisco, CA 94117)

SHOCK NAGASAKI – "Late 4 Life/ Classified Information"

SHOCK NAGASAKI's latest single reprises their classic punk sound, a sharp-edged attack that recalls the vintage ANGELIC UPSTARTS married to the swagger of the PROFESSIONALS. The 45's best assets include catchy, singalong choruses and a fresh, immediate production that recalls 1982 UK (in a positive way); both tracks are strong, but "Late 4 Life" is especially evocative. Cool blood-flecked white vinyl adds to the fun. Recommended. (SS)
(Slab-o-Wax, PO Box 461082, San Antonio, TX 78246)

SHORT FUSE – "Remain Steadfast" LP

These Germans come at you with 18 tracks of stripped-down, old school hardcore/punk. The vocals are abrasive and gruff, and the music—while a little too overproduced—is fast and raging enough to hold my interest for the entire 20 minutes. Not bad. (CC)
(Underestimated, 1349 N. Bell, Chicago, IL 60622)

SHORT FUSE – "Fruitless Efforts" EP

Mid-to-fast paced, aggressive, head bobbing hardcore punk. SHORT FUSE is out of Germany—they were just in the US on tour and I sadly missed them. This is a good record with loads of punch and enough melody to keep the songs running through my mind after the music is actually over. Good stuff. (MS)
(Underestimated, 1349 N Bell, Chicago, IL 60622 USA)

SOCRATES – "Vultures, Hyenas, and Coyotes…" EP

Boppy, angular, dirty-as-fuck, rhythm-driven jams from Lyon, France. SOCRATES has an assaultive playing style and good intensity; their tones are solid and noisy and they would fit well on a mix tape between bands like UNWOUND, ZENI GEVA, LIGHTNING BOLT, and BIG BUSINESS. The crushing rhythm section has a lot of soulful swing and a great sense of time. Vocals are a bit subdued overall, but fitting and stylistically well-placed, reminding me a little of Sonic Youth. No lyrics included. Very good stuff. (BS)
(Gaffer, www.gaffercrecords.com)

STAPLER – "Metaphysical Haircut" CD

Ohio bands always seem to proudly specialize in tuneful disorientation and these dudes are similarly engaged in hoisting that particular upside-down flag up the well-greased stripper pole that has absorbed spunk 'n' grit from V3 to ROBERT POLLARD to TIMES NEW VIKING over the years. Add the STAPLER to that proud tradition. Their songs are so full of noise, yelling, feedback, and *melody* that they occasionally tip the boat over in their eagerness to overload the fucker, but they still manage to meld their influences with their own take to create a floatable sonic shrine to the early-'90s Anyway/Datapanik sound. The real standout on this is "To the Trees," where they spend about five minutes taunting the ghosts of Ohio's indie rock past into jamming with them on a basement stage to their 30 converts. Any anthro-musicolologist with an ounce of sap-sucking moxie would declare this to be American Religion's Folk Mutation Part Eleventy-Twelve. (RW)
(Columbus Discount)

STATE – "All Wrong" LP

A new record by Michigan's STATE. Yup, the old band. On this LP, they have done a way better job on this than their old 12" *False Power*, which only had one ripping hardcore song. This is aggressive HC punk; if it had been released in the '80s it would probably fall into the "classic" category so many folks talk about. Tracks like "Who Needs It" and "Noise Complaint" still have that ferocious energy that I am a sucker for. A cool release. (MS)
(Underestimated, 1349 N. Bell, Chicago, IL 60622)

STEP2FAR / SPIDER CREW – split CD

Both bands on this split contribute six songs of metallic, NYHC hardcore with guttural vocals reminecent of AGNOSTIC FRONT. With titles like "Never Surrender," "Punks 'n' Skins," and "Judgement Day," both bands bring surprisingly original material to an otherwise saturated genre. (CC)
(Street Anthem, 1530 Locust St., PMB 218, Philly, PA 19102)

STOLEN LIVES / TIME OF MY LIFE – split EP

To the best of my knowledge I've never heard a band from the Czech Republic until today. This is not too shabby modern hardcore with the occasional gang vocal chorus. I'm not too incredibly stoked on it. I think these guys should form a super group called TIME OF MY STOLEN LIFE. Comes in a very nicely printed sleeve on real thick vinyl. Probably from the place that Pirate Press gets their stuff done at. I still don't understand how you can be a "press" when someone else does all the actual work. Jeez did I just say that? (ST)
(myspace.com/stolenlives, myspace.com/timeofmylife)

NIKKI SUDDEN – "Barroom Blues" EP

Nikki Sudden is probably best known for being in SWELL MAPS, considered one of the most exciting, innovative, and legendary bands of the English '70s DIY scene, and for good reason. This 7" is light years away from that world; his backing band is called SOUTHERN BITCH and the music sounds like that attempted by many an English singer since the example was set by Mick Jagger—rock-styled country. I hate hearing English people sing with an American accent—it's so corny and unnecessary. I really wanted to like this because I truly love the SWELL MAPS, but it just sounds like roadside barroom music filtered through the lens of alt-country, quite possibly the worse genre known to man. I know you can't make music that replicates the sounds made in your youth for all eternity without embarrassing yourself, but surely there's a way of retaining the creative spark without resorting to such generic roadside bar/Levi's-ads-of-the-'80s music. (LG)
(Rob's House, www.robshouserecords.com)

TAKE MY CHANCES – "Down Here With Us" CD

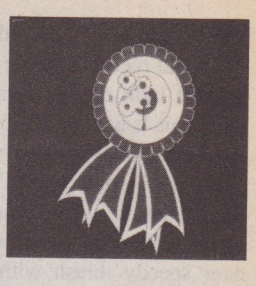
Highly polished hardcore from the East Coast that sounds a lot like KID DYNAMITE. They do a good job at mixing aggression and melody, and I think that the mall rats will eat this shit up. Sadly they attempt to cover the MISFITS and BLACK FLAG and fail miserably at both. (RC)
(One Day Savior, PO Box 372, Wilson Park, NY 11596, www.onedaysavior.com)

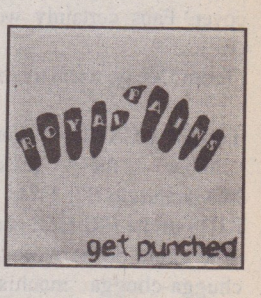
TERRIOR BUTE – "Return to the Astro Castle" CD

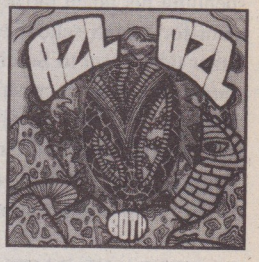
Okay, I am over most of the synth punk now. A synthesizer is fine in doses and combined with a rocking guitar, but when songs are built around it, they just sound weak with some exceptions. TERRIOR BRUTE sounds like DIGITAL LEATHER with Atom from ATOM AND HIS PACKAGE on vocals. I hope TERRIOR BUTE does return to the Astro Castle, and doesn't bother coming back out. (JF)
(Vicious Pop, 4023 N. Bartlett Ave, Shorewood, WI 53211)

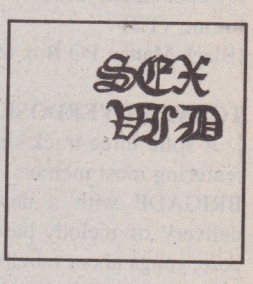
THAT WAS THEN – "Troublemakers" CDEP

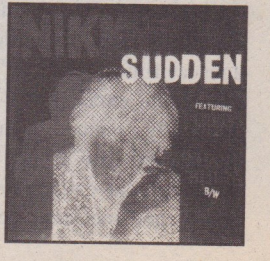
This Memphis outfit brings us six songs of heavy, modern hardcore with sweeping guitar octaves. The vocalist has a very raspy, energetic quality, singing mostly about personal strife. Not bad. (CC)
(no address)











RECORDS

THEY LIVE – "Blurred" EP

An old recording from '98 that's finally seeing the light of day from this Buffalo thrash unit. This is a stripped-down, more or less two-piece version of the band with some nice female screams on some tracks. The diminished line-up causes no corresponding attenuation of intensity though—ten tracks of furious vocals over speedy thrash with great working class consciousness lyrics and a TURNING POINT cover. Fans certainly won't be disappointed. (EL)
(Tooth Decay, www.toothdecayrecords.com)

THINK I CARE – "World Asylum" LP

What the fuck happened to Massachusetts?!?! From DMZ and the REAL KIDS to the FREEZE and NEGATIVE FX, the state could do no wrong! Is this cookie-cutter chugga-chugga machismo some kind of penance? The lyrics read like a kid who's been spending his lunch money on dime bags wrote them for a high school poetry assignment. I'd rather take a trip to South Lebanon to hear the sound of a mortar crushing through my skull than hear another one of these derivative '90s straight edge metal-core records. (VH)
(Bridge Nine, 35 Congress St., Salem, MA 01970, www.bridge9.com)

TO HELL AND BACK – CD

I am never one to fear the rock…in fact I have been known to embrace it on many occasions, especially when dudes with a hardcore pedigree are bringing it. Ex-DEVOID OF FAITH and JBA folks leaving the hardcore at the door and going for more of a thick-necked heavy rock vibe, this reminds me of the excellent BLACK COUGAR SHOCK UNIT but a little more *rock*. The vocals are super gruff so it still has some hardcore roots, but those guitar riffs and leads are straight-up cock rock dudes. It's cool an all, just maybe a little too, uh, rock for me. (TB)
(Black Matter, PO Box 666, Troy, NY 12181)

TODAY'S OVERDOSE – "Insomnia" EP

A solid three-track single from a new band featuring most members of Sweden's WOLFBRIGADE with a new bass player. Solid delivery of melody-based punk-edged hardcore; songs about rebelling against the dreariness of everyday living, marked by ridiculously excellent playing and harsh vocals. This treads the same murky fusion of melody and thick metallic hardcore that TRAGEDY does at times. TODAY'S OVERDOSE does this sound exceedingly well, but this fusion has always seemed to muddle both aspects—too bogged with severe vocals and thick riffs to attain real catchiness, and too pleasantly upbeat and measured to get head-crushingly brutal. The last track, "Re-ignition," picks up the speed and pace but bites toothless with the drums buried under the sludgy distortion. Still clocks in as a solid and impressive debut. (KS)
(Profane Existence, www.profaneexistence.com)

THE TOUCH-ME-NOTS – "Hey, Television" EP

Coincidentally, I was at a party this past weekend where this two-piece was playing. Ironically, everyone else was walking around with copies of this single, but here I am reviewing it. Melodic blues-ish garage rock drawing inspiration from the newbies of the genre—i.e., THE REIGNING SOUND, TENNESSEE TEARJERKERS, and BBQ. The tribute to television "Hey, Television" is catchy even if I don't totally agree with the sentiment. (CK)
(Roach and Squirrel, PO Box 27013, Oakland, CA 94602, the_touch_me_nots@hotmail.com)

TRENDY BASTARD – "Smoke on the Walter" EP

Muscatine, Iowa's finest lay down some seriously edge-y, abrasively recorded, fast and tuneless metal with some real face grinding parts on this one-sided silk screened slab of death. This shit is so fucking hard to listen to—mainly it's just the long wind-tunnel sound recording, but who knows? The intensity is there; "Metallica's Greatest Hit was Black Ice" is a stomping anthem to behead millions to. Could be a diamond in the rough here. No lyrics. (BS)
(Give Praise, PO Box 494, Barnstable, MA 02630-0494, www.trendybastard.org)

TRIPLE THREAT – "Into the Darkness" LP

Judging by the pics on the insert, I was expecting generic '88 straight edge hardcore (nice matching X Swatchs dudes), but I was way off mark. Featuring folks from MOUTHPIECE and HANDS TIED, this takes those bands to the next level, incorporating the traditional straight edge hardcore sound but with some way more off-kilter BLACK FLAG/BL'AST moments. The production is huge and the playing is pretty inventive but it does get an little much after a while; that being said I'm pretty impressed. (TB)
(Bridge Nine, 35 Congress St., Salem, MA 01970, www.bridge9.com)

TWENTYFOUR HOUR HELL – "Introducing My Rock 'n' Roll" CD

The second full-length from this Swedish punk rock 'n' roll band. Very tuneful stuff from the schools of SOCIAL DISTORTION and the SAINTS, as well as a little glam rock 'n' roll—let's say, the NEW YORK DOLLS and ALICE COOPER. This band puts many a greaser band to shame. Good deal. (RL)
(Mash, www.twentyfourhourhell.com)

UPSET NOISE – "Ribellati Ancora" CD

Another cool excavation of obscure '80s Italian hardcore by the fine folks at SOA Records, this time with UPSET NOISE, who had an EP, a split EP, and a (not so great) LP during their few-years tenure. Now, I have a huge soft spot for old Italian punk. The classic bands—IMPACT, PEGGIO PUNX, WRETCHED, DECLINO—were wild and spontaneous sounding in a way that I think few other bands ever matched. UPSET NOISE is not quite on the A-list level of the aforementioned, but they still have that scratchy, scrappy guitar sound, the crazed vocals and the furious punk energy of the best of Italian punk. This CD is a must for fanatics of classic Italian hardcore, though admittedly it falls just below "essential" for fans of international punk who don't share my completist tendencies. (GN)
(SOA, Via Oderisi Da Gubbi 67/69, 001-16 Rome, ITALY, www.soarecords.it)

VÅLD – "Boycott Your Life" CD

Crusty without being crust, rocking without being rock, heavy without being metal, and melodic at times without being emo. Sometimes it's nice to not be able to pigeonhole a band even if it makes it harder to write the review. Some sort of bastard child of thrash that has me headbanging. Can be found somewhere between WOLFBRIGADE and SEPULTURA without guitar solos. From Finland and this is their second release. (MH)
(Treason Troops, crust_metal@yahoo.com)

VERSE – "From Anger and Rage "CD

Rhode Island's VERSE has always been a band that I would rather experience live that listen to on record. Watching Sean lose his shit on stage is always an inspiring experience. His harsh, atonal vocal style and incendiary lyrics remind me a lot of Zach from INSIDE OUT/RAGE (especially with his prolific use of the word "motherfucker"). There are some great moments on this record where VERSE delves into an almost 108/RESSURECTION zone with tracks like "Lost" and "Start a Fire." Unfortunately, those moments are fleeting, and most of the music has a very melodic BANE/COMEBACK KID flavor that does little for me. Still, it is done exceptionally well, and the lyrical message is 100% spot on. Everything about *From Anger and Rage* is twice as intense as their first full-length *Rebuild*, from the production, to the vocals, to the song writing. So if you are fan, you will not be disappointed. (CC)
(Rivalry, www.rivalryrecords.com)

VOLEDAM DISEASE – "Allways" EP

A Japanese band with a healthy love of a foreign scene? So what else is new. Well, this time around we have a Japanese band rockin' their love for old Dutch hardcore (hence the Dutch band name). The sound and production is pretty modern and so is the insanely ugly cover art (is that an angry Charlie Brown decapitating Linus and Lucy in front of a windmill? WTF?), so I am not thinking this sounds particularly like any of the old Dutch greats. Instead, this is fast and somewhat generic hardcore that nevertheless gets by on energy, though I can't say that it's wormed its way into constant rotation for me. Decent stuff, but I admit it was kind of hard to think of anything to say about this other than "meh." (GN)
(Kangaroo, Middenweg 13, 1098 AA Amsterdam, HOLLAND)

THE WEEGS – "The Million Sounds of Black" LP

Hey, you don't run into bands influenced by the LAUGHING CLOWNS too often, do ya? I'm projecting of course—jeez, what's the chance these guys have even heard of those early-'80s post-punk Aussies led by ex-SAINTS man Ed Kuepper? True, the spidery-clipped guitar leads, squashed-sounding synth, and paralyzing rapid-heartbeat drumming are all consistent with the CLOWNS, although I'd have to say the vocals are more in a jittery vein a la ESSENDON AIRPORT (to stay within chunda sightlines). True, they lack a horn section, and their song structures are closer to XEROBOT than anything from 1981 art school territory...shit, what's in this drink anyway, I'm all fukked up. Never review on the arm, makes you wander around the keyboard when you should just be typing "Indie-synth band, fans of SERVOTRON and the NUMBERS, dig in!" (RW)
(Hungry Eye, PO Box 20403, Tompkins Sq. Station, New York, NY 10009)

WHY NOT – "Caution Wet Floor" CD

Mostly meat 'n' potatoes fast punk with "humorous" (I hope) metal, rap, and spoken word bits. Kinda reminds me of early CASUALTIES-type stuff with more poppy woah-woah parts. Outside of some homophobic nonsense, to call this harmlessly mediocre is probably making it sound more interesting than it actually is. (CS)
(SoFLA, bpskunk@hotmail.com)

WRECKING CREW – "Balance of Terror" CD

It appears the Boston hardcore scene's affinity for the CRO-MAGS and New York hardcore goes back farther than I suspected. Even in the dark ages of the late '80s Boston scene, WRECKING CREW was borrowing heavily from the NYHC crossover scene, with their vocalist Glenn Dudley doing his best impression of John Joseph. The liner notes say they looked to DISCHARGE and MOTÖRHEAD to root their sound, which can be seen in glimpses with songs like "Holding Back" and "Balance of Terror." They even go as far to cover San Diego Dis-Chargers, BATTALION OF SAINTS. While not as memorable as the real thing (read: CRO-MAGS), this is still a good record. So good, that it's hard to believe that it has been out of print for nearly 16 years. (CC)
(I Scream, www.iscreamrecords.com)

YA BASTA! – "Sans Retour" LP

Oh, god, not another French communist skinhead ska-punk band! When will it ever stop?! All sarcasm aside, these guys manage to play some really tough sounding ska that obviously gets its inspiration more from 2-Tone ska than from more recent (what wave are we on now?) bands. This is the reason OP IVY was so good and bands that tried to be like them were so lame. It seems like the non-English language bands may save this genre yet. Fans of LA PLEBE take note! (PC)
(Twisted Chords, Ruetweg 1a, 76327 Pfinztal, GERMANY, www.twisted-chords.de)

V/A – "All Punks Spending Drunk Night, All Drunks Making Punk Noise" EP

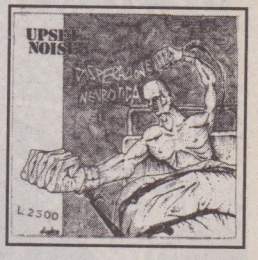
Seventeen songs from a dozen bands, and on a 7"—you know that means they're real short and real fast. Despite the obvious fact that this is all blazing hardcore, there's a pretty good range of styles here, from the more straight-ahead punk of NETJAJEV SS and RAJOITUS to the lightning blur thrash of BRODY'S MILITIA and VÖETSEK to the blasting gurgling grind of TUMOR-FEAST and SHRAPNEL FACE. Most bands are either from Sweden or the States, with one each from Finland, Brazil and Japan; MASSGRAV, MERDA, WIDE-SPREAD BLOODSHED, NO VALUE, HELLNATION and something in Japanese are the other bands that round out this damn near perfect slab of noise. (EL)
(Rescued From Life, c/o Clay Newell, PO Box 14821, Haltom City, TX 76117)

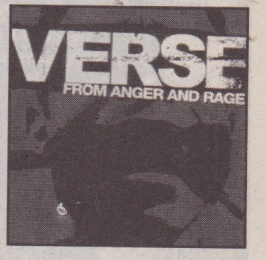
V/A – "Hallelujah" EP

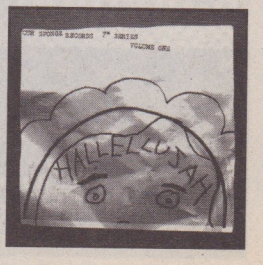
A four-band compilation featuring acts from Canada's western half. Kelona's HIPPIECRITZ have a basic drunk-punk/American street-punk side that comes off as a bush league BODIES. The EFFIGY could have played any number of anarchist picnics I have seen and would have been right at home playing with the AUTONOMY's of the world. The TUPS are just a mess that sort of remind me of the total warehouse party house band. TxHxEx just plain suck. Nothing on this EP makes me want to recommend it, but what would you expect from a label named Cum Sponge Records? (JF)
(Cum Sponge, PO Box 176, Onanole, MB R0J 1N0, CANADA)

V/A – "So Fla, So Good, So What" CD

I like regional comps a lot for some reason, and this one from Southern Florida is yet another good one. The opening track is a catchy sing-along from STAY HIT, and the quality pretty much keeps up from there. Lots of bands that neither you nor I have ever heard of before, and one or two that we have (like the CRUMBS and AGAINST ALL AUTHORITY) join together for a grab bag of punk that mostly falls into the mid-tempo/melodic category. But there's also your token ska band (the DELEGATES), a little thrash (the RUNNAMUCKS), metallic hardcore (SOUND 4 SOUND), some really crappy (indie?) rock (THE STOP-MOTION), and bizarre dark disco (POOL PARTY). Worth a listen, especially if this is your local scene. (PC)
(SoFla, www.soflarecords.com)







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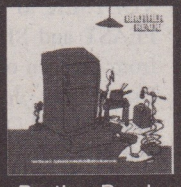

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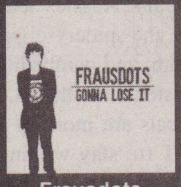

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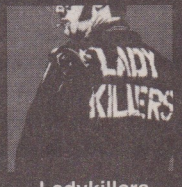

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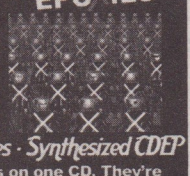

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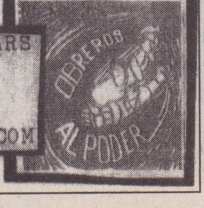

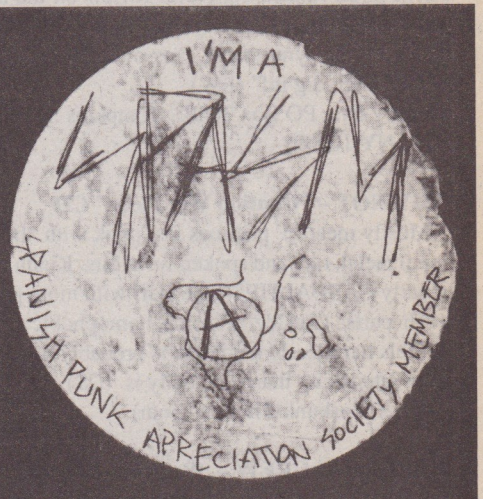

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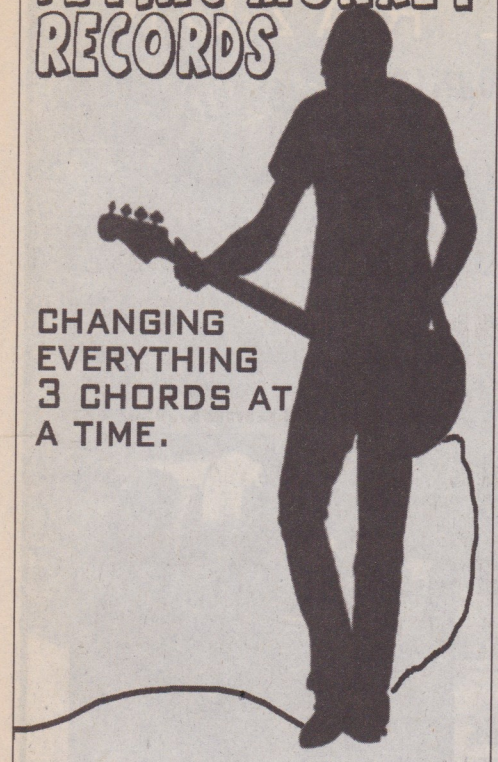

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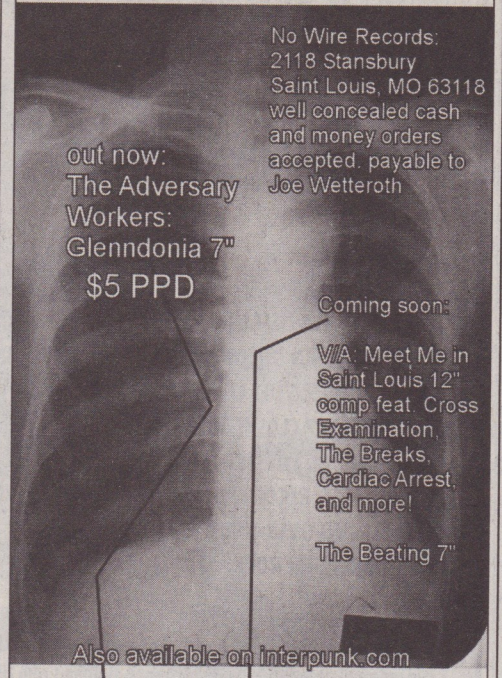

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HATE 08
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NIGHTMARE Scatterraw LP
HATE 06
Blazing HC from Japan. Vinyl version of the Hardcore Kitchen CD. In cooperation with Plaguebearer and PutridFilthConspiracy

NIGHTMARE Refugee Of Logical Society 7"
HATE 07
3 new tracks of killer Japanese HC. In cooperation with Plaguebearer

DEATHTOKEN / KYKLOOPIEN SUKUPUUTOO Split 7"
HATE 09
Straightforward, intense HC from Finland and Denmark
In cooperation with SpildAfVinyl, Tuska&Ahdistus

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VISIONS OF WAR / COP ON FIRE "Split" 12inch • **BURIAL** 1st 7" • **BURIAL** "Never Give Up... Never Give In" 12inch • **BEHIND ENEMY LINES** "The Global Cannibal" CD • **SUICIDE BLITZ** "Ride The Steel" 12inch ...

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Phobia / Skrupel Split CdEp $5.50 Ferocious grindcore from both bands. This is Phobia's best stuff in years in my opinion. Essential.
Insuiciety "Believe And Die" Cd Totally devastating and refreshingly original doom/sludgecore in vein of Eyehategod and Grief.
Desolatevoid "Self Medicated Psycho Therapy" Cd Consider this an album that is anchored in a more straight ahead SOILENT GREEN, sucks the bone marrow out of EYEHATEGOD, and smokes up a little HIGH ON FIRE. Maybe then you'll understand why this shit is too heavy. (Blabbermouth.net)
Neuron "Gleichschritt" Cd Wicked grindcore from Germany. Some of the best I've heard. Neuron is all about grinding, thick, powerful grindcore
Gaurithoth "Perverse" Cd Raging European Black Metal. A little like Impaled Nazarene, Gaurithoth explodes on their debut album of pure insanity.
Mesrine "I Choose Murder" Cd Essential grindcore / Metal with a style to that similar to Dahmer This is awesome grindcore.
Diskonto "Watch Us Burn" Cd They are from Sweden so you should already know this is awesome. Their best album to date for sure.
Accion Mutante "The Complete Discography" Cd Everything they have recorded so far. Highly Essential. Total Crust / Metal.
Wartorn "Adolph Bushler" 7" Scandinavian thrash like State of Fear. This is limited to 300 Copies only.
To What End? "Concealed Below The Surface" Cd / Lp I consider this band to be the best Swedish Hardcore band going right now.
Misery "Production Through Destruction" Cd Re-release of this hard to find classic crust album from the early 90's
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Words That Burn "Profits of the Christ" 7" $4.00 ppd US / $6.00 World
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Head Hits Concrete "Thy Kingdom Come Undone" Cd Discography of their stuff to date. Head splitting ferocious grindcore.
Homoiratus "Apocalypse" Cd Pulverizing Grindcore / Death Metal from Greece. Comparisons to Rotten sound come to mind.
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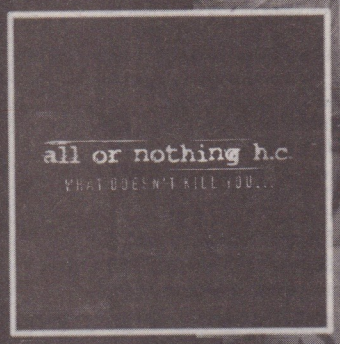

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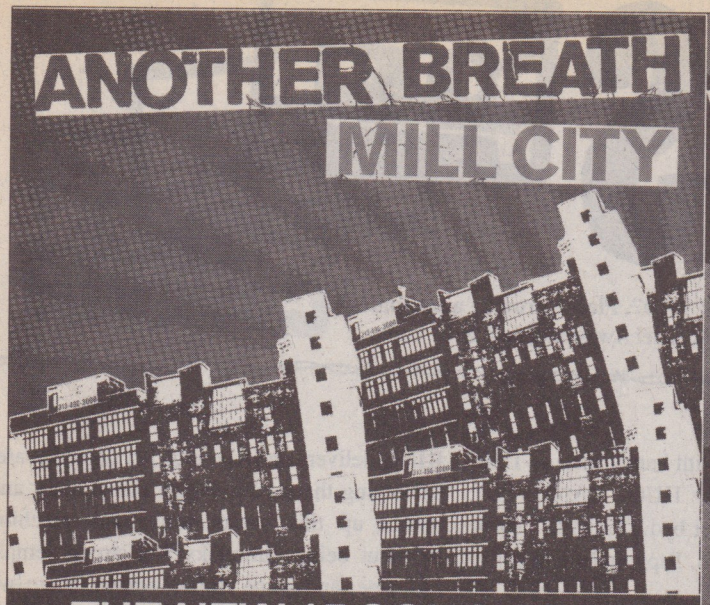

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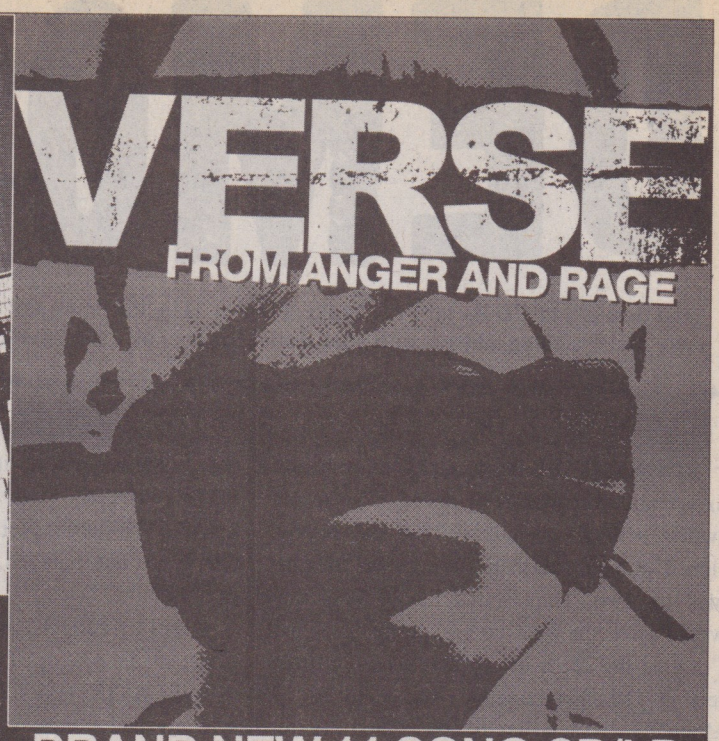

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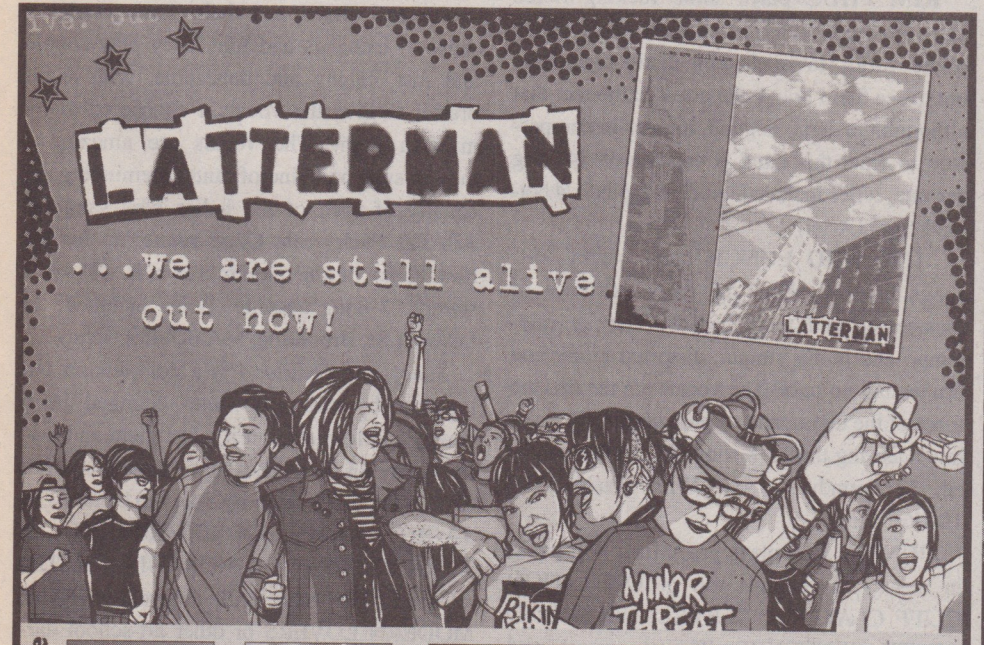

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ANGRY TRIBE has a catchy music bed—mid-tempo with bursts of speed. The vocals switch between furious yelling and impassioned singing, and then she manages to combine the two. They sound like a band that would have the kids going apeshit live, and I'm glad the demo has captured some of that feeling. (10 song cassette, lyrics included. 17 Mountclare Ave, Asheville, NC 28801.) (Erin)

BUCK GOOTER is a combination of MOJO NIXON, BUTTHOLE SURFERS, and a general Southern casual "fuck you" attitude. The demo is mid-tempo at its fastest, while having semi-long songs and interesting musical detours. The vocals add more texture, and are louder than the music for the most part. (11 song CD, no lyrics included. PO Box 113, Harrisonburg, VA 22803.) (Erin)

CANADIAN RIFLE rules! A perfect mix of melody and catchiness, with dissatisfaction and depression, all played out fast enough to dance to! The gruff vocals are sung, and sparse enough to function as another instrument, no more or less important than all the others. Continuing the fine tradition of killer Chicago bands, this is winner of the month. (5 song CD, lyrics included. 1719 W. Albion Ave. Chicago, IL 60626.) (Erin)

DIE BRUCKE plays thrash. Easy to review a band that starts out the demo with "So, what do you thrash?" "What do you got?" Made me laugh, anyways. So yep, thrash band, a touch of fancy metal leads going on, but for the most part fast, mean, spitting vocals, no nonsense. And, they credit the "crew" vocals, awesome! ($6 ppd. 8 song CD, no lyrics included. 4698 East Bay Highway, Ben Eoin, NS B1J 1N5, Canada.) (Erin)

THE FUCKING BUCKAROOS play s old-timey-sounding folk punk, that weirdly sounds like a countrified BOBBY JOE EBOLA & THE CHILDREN MCNUGGETS. Fits right in with the current surge of folk punk here in the Bay Area with bands such as THE SOUR MASH JUG HUG BAND and SHAKEY BONES. Not bad. ($2 ppd. 7 song CD, lyrics not included. Rtpugh@gmail.com) (Ariel)

KIDS EXPLODE plays that late '90s West Coast screamo, a la UNDER A DYING SUN or NECKTIE PARTY, to a tee. Whiny, screamy, and at times sassy vocals paired with pretty undistorted guitar soundscapes. Close your eyes and think of faux hawks, clean t-shirts, and irony. (6 song cassette, no lyrics included. Kristof Kuenssler, Eschholestr. 35, D-79106 Frieburg, Germany. unfun@gmx.net) (Ariel)

KIM PHUC plays some fucking fierce hardcore punk with a bleak unblinking vision of the world. Having had the distinctive pleasure to see them live, I can attest to the fact that although the demo is good, it pales in comparison to what this band is capable of. (4 song cassette, lyrics included. goldenhappiness@hotmail.com) (Ariel)

MEN WHO LUNCH plays catchy lo-fi songs that are about the daily existence of themselves and their friends. They're mid-tempo and pretty simple, distorted guitar and drums, but no bass! The vocals are the driving force of the demo, and they chant the vocals as much as sing them. (8 song CD, lyrics included. 52 Soundview Ave, White Plains, NY 10606.) (Erin)

PUNKIN PIE plays gritty lo-fi pop punk; in a way it reminds me of OPERATION CLIFF CLAVIN or CLEVELAND BOUND DEATH SENTENCE. This is sweet and poppy, but nicely rough around the edges. Geographically one can locate this sound directly in the center of Bloomington, Indiana. I can get into it. (nine song CD, lyrics included. Rosapunx@yahoo.com) (Ariel)

I have three demands for music in order to qualify it as truly exciting, and **RED HERRING** delivers on all counts. My demands are: something that sets a band's sound apart and breaks up this monotonous punk machine (without being gimmicky!), a strong female presence, and some rippin' songs. Here we have a tuba subbing for bass, a banjo taking over for guitar, powerful fiery female vocals, and songs that stay with you all day. You'd think that the tuba and banjo combination would result in some sort of whimsical folk ensemble, but thankfully instead it's more of a "post-apocalypse punk" sound. Find this, listen to it. ($4 ppd. 6 song cassette, no lyrics included. Icky A, PO Box 6834, Portland, OR 97228. Dresdenchina@hotmail.com) (Ariel)

RED THREAD is fucking great! They are snotty and pissed and their music carries a sense of catharsis and fun! They play simple and fast, catchy and danceable, with small breaks to give the vocals a chance to really make a point. The vocals are amazing—they're sung and kind of ranted, reminding me equally of each of the ladies who sung for BLATZ. Fuck yeah. Close runner-up for the best demo of the month. Love it. ($1 or 3 stamps. 7 song cassette, lyrics included. 22 Leverett St, Brookline, MA 02445.) (Erin)

Saucy and Overload is a compilation put together by two guys who changed band names and formats, but it's just them and a 4-track having fun. The first "band" is THE SADISTIC ZITS, a goofy fake rap band. BOB SAGETS ARMY, AN EXHIBITION ON AGRICULTURE, and MORANIS MILITIA all sound the same, with different levels of MODERN LOVERS or other art-school darling influences. The songs are slow and simple, with the vocals loud in the mix. I guess that's the point, so you can hear the humor. The bands also occasionally rap. I was hoping for more from LITTLE DEBBIE D-BEAT, but there's not a D-beat to be heard in the song. ($3 ppd. 21 song CD, some lyrics. 6 Stewart Ave, Glen Falls, NY 12801.) (Erin)

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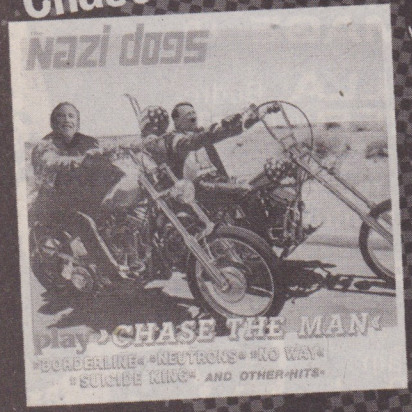

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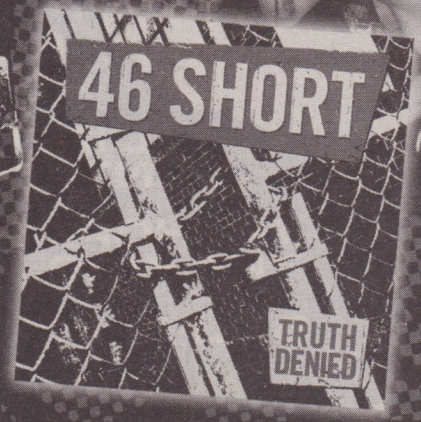

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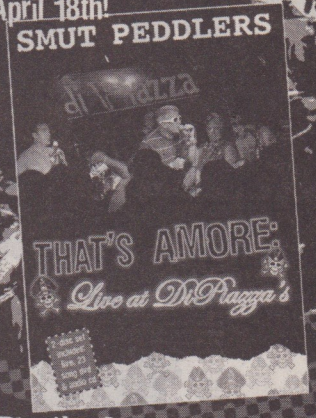

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ZINES

Reviews by: Aragorn (AR), Paul Curran (PC), Mikel Delgado (MD), Layla Gibbon (LG), Cassie Harwood (CH), Chris Hubbard (CS), Harald Hartmann (HH), Nick Mangel (NM), Jeff Mason (JM), Golnar Nikpour (GN), Casey Ress (CR), Andy Shoup (AS), Thera Webb (TW).

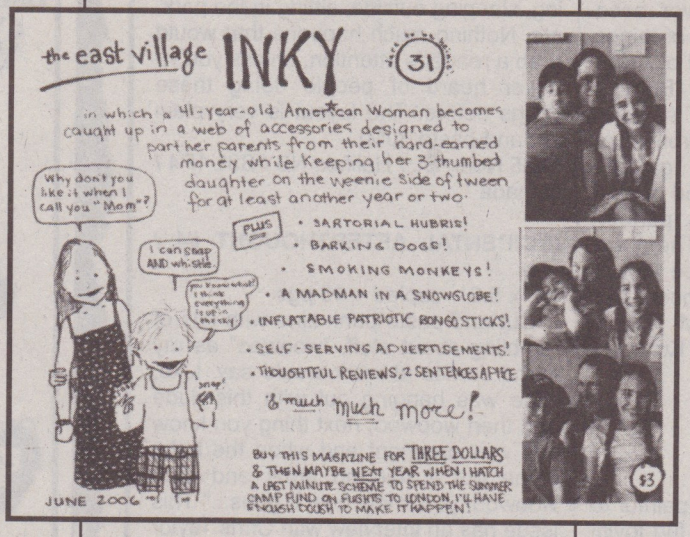
Send zines for review to: MRR, PO Box 460760, San Francisco, CA 94146. Please include the following info on a separate piece of paper with your zine: postpaid price, international price, do you take trades?, size, copied or printed?, number of pages, language, mailing address, website address, email address.

ARTICHOKE HANDS! / $2 or trade
5.5 x 8.5 – copied – 44 pgs
Halifax on the map? This zine describes goings on at "Canada's only split-level punk house (that we know of)." There's a mundane travel story mixed in, but mostly it consists of in-jokes and "see-how-goofy-we-are." Flyers from shows at the house are reprinted. I don't see or hear much coming out of the Maritime Provinces, but the underrepresented location is the best thing about this. (JM)
6265 North St. / Halifax, NS / B3L 1P4 / Canada

BEAT MOTEL #5 / $3, £1.50
5.5 x 8.5 – printed – 72 pgs
What I like best about *Beat Motel* is that it's more or less a typical music fanzine—columns, interviews, reviews, etc.—but unlike a lot of music zines it has a pretty consistent sense of humor. It's genuinely a treat to read a zine that doesn't take itself too seriously; it gives the writers in *Beat Motel* a bit of character. The interviews are with bands that are a little to rock club for me—Against Me, Lagwagon, Rise Against—but they are OK. There are some really great columns (and there are a *lot* of columns), and the reviews section is extensive. The only way in which this zine is lacking is that the layout is a kind of boring. Nonetheless, this is another cool issue of this UK zine. (GN)
71 Rectory Rd / Ipswitch / Suffolk / IP2 8EQ / England

BUILD YOUR OWN SCENE #6 & 7 / free (plus postage?)
5.5 x 8.5 – copied – 32 pgs
A rad little local music zine from Northwestern Illinois (that's near Iowa) with lots of in-depth show reviews, odds 'n' ends like road trip stories and rants about how punk Duane Peters is. This zine gets props for not being formatted like every other zine in the world, i.e., no columns section at the beginning, reviews section at the end and interviews in between. Instead the reviews are fewer and longer, the interviews are short and sweet, and the rest is a random assortment of fun stuff. My only complaint is that it has a very generic computer layout, but at least that means that it's readable and the photos look good. You can check out their back issues for free online (PC)
519 7th Ave. / Fulton, IL 61252
www.buildyourownscene.com

CELEBRITY PETS #3 / $2 or trade
8.5 x 6.5 – copied – 20 pgs
Cool zine here from Fresno with an interest in wiener dogs, punk, fashion, and humor. The zine seems to combine all those things quite well. This issue has Love Equals Death, Groovie Ghoulies, and Pink Spiders as well as fashion tips, reviews, etc. Cool. (NM)
PO Box 28211 / Fresno, CA / 93729
celebritypets@gmail.com



CHUMPIRE #184 & 188 / stamp or trade
8.5 x 11 – copied – 4 & 6 pgs
What happened to #186 & 187? Anyway these two issues of *Chumpire* are much bigger (whoa, six pages!) and much better looking than usual. The photos look great and the layout are basic and funky but very readable. The writing, on the other hand, is always this zine's weak point. *Chumpire* mostly contains reviews, which consistently leave you knowing absolutely nothing about the thing being reviewed. Here's one of an LP by The Good Good: "This is a sweet, varied record. The packaging is beautiful. They had a kid sing a song and fit it to a loping tune. It's great for leaving me wondering what the next song would sound like." Um…yeah. (PC)
Greg Knowles / 1119 Florence St. / Lebanon, PA 17042
chumpire@gmail.com

DEGENERATION OVERDRIVE #3 / free in Montreal, $2 elsewhere
5.5 x 8.5 – copied – 48 pgs
First thing's first: I am not so into the punk subgenres that *Degeneration Overdrive* covers. The cover feature is an interview with Nashville Pussy, and some other bands featured include the Candy Snatchers, the Bones, and Paul Di'anno (formerly of Iron Maiden). The reviews are of a similar ilk, covering such ground as Beast of Bourbon, Antiseen, and the like. Nonetheless, I enjoyed this zine. The writers are clearly really into what they're covering, and they do a good job at it. The interviews are relatively well done (they also interview the (UK) Subhumans, Girlschool, and the Bobbyteens, along with a couple of others), as are the reviews. If you are into the aforementioned bands, or see one kicking around free in Montreal you could do worse than checking out *DG-OD.* (GN)
Degeneration Overdrive / 5505 Iberville #236 / Montreal Qc / H2G 2B2 / Canada
degenerationoverdrive@gmail.com

DOLL #227 / $?
8.5 x 11 – printed – 140 pgs – Japanese
People who have reviewed this magazine before all will timidly point out that there isn't a lot to say when you can't read the print. *Doll* is half glossy and half newsprint, but neither. The pages feel like smooth cardstock and are black and white but there's a few pages that are full color. It covers a wide array of genres (rockabilly, crust, garage,

new wave, etc.) internationally, but primarily Japanese bands. As far as I can tell, they got the gamut covered. This issue has English here and there so I know there's a feature on straight edge, NOFX, and The Mods. (JB)
No. 303 Aota Bldg. 3-1-9 / Kita, Kohenji / Suginami-Ku / Tokyo
hensu@doll-mag.co.jp

DOLL #228 / $?
7 x 10 – printed – 140 pgs – Japanese
Great photos and lots of ads, and some great looking stuff I can't read. Vancouver punk history/discography featuring Pointed Sticks. Also Imperial Leather, Nashville Pussy, and a feature on women in punk in the LA area. (MD)
No 303 Aota Bldg / 3-1-9, Kita / Kohenji, Suginami-Ku / Tokyo / Japan

DOLL #229 / no price listed
9 x 10 – printed – 138 pgs – Japanese
This "super rock magazine" features the cover story "PDX Chainsaw Assault," with an interview with and Japanese tour diary from cacophonous noisemakers Lebenden Toten, along with a write-up of many crusty, etc. releases from the (US) West Coast's poorest city. The "super rock magazine" thing is kind of accurate, 'cuz the (color!) photos of said black-clad thrashers on stage are awfully fucking sweet—I seriously doubt any better photography of this band has ever been published. Also on the thrash side of things are two US tour diaries, from Mind of Asian and the Warhead/Forward/Tragedy "Burning Against Spirits (Madness)" tour. A great number of Japanese bands are profiled or interviewed—rockabilly, skinhead, garage, and others who I can't tell what kind of stuff they play by looking. *Doll* is huge, perfect-bound, and professional-looking. There are ads and reviews, but not a lot, maybe 15% of the whole. If you're learning Japanese, this will keep you busy for a month. (JM)
No. 303 Aota Bldg. / 3-1-9 / Kita / Kohenji / Suginami-Ku / Tokyo / Japan
hensyu@doll-mag.co.jp

EAST VILLAGE INKY #31 / $3
4 x 2.5 – copied – 32 pgs
I hate getting this zine. I find it painful to read and always wish some cute fun lovin' baby lovin' human would get it for review and consume it with joy. It's like reading the women who write for *Bust* magazine writing about the *miracle of children*, full of "aw don't kids say the darndest things" sentiment which has no place in my world. I have nothing against kids or punk parents or whatever, I just hate reading about wacky gentrifying artist yuppie types and their alternative Martha Stewart lifestyles. It's not poorly written or offensive or anything it's just bland and makes me think of how this generation of people have turned their lifestyles into commerce. If you are at all interested in what a liberal East Village mom feels about the American Girl dolls then this would be the place to start finding out. (LG)
PO Box 22754 / Brooklyn, NY 11202

EQUALIZING DISTORT June 2006 / $?
5.5 x 8 – copied – 20 pgs
This issue contains interviews with DIRTY BS, KNUCKLEHEAD, and TOTAL CHAOS. The print wing of a punk radio show in Toronto, which is probably better to listen to and not so great to read. Not much of substance here, but maybe you'll like it if you listen to the show. (LG)
35 Raglan Ave / Unit 204 / Toronto ON / M6C 2K7 / Canada

EQUALIZING DISTORT July 2006 / $?
5.5 x 8.5 – copied – 16 pgs
Another issue of the zine made by the people who do the punk show on CIUT. This one features interviews with GUNNAR HANSEN, THE VAPIDS, PISSCHRIST and GBH. There are also a lot of reviews. If you care what GUNNAR HANSEN are influenced by then send off for this publication. Personally I found it borrrring. It's just a standard music zine. Maybe the show is rad? (LG)
35 Raglan Ave / Unit 204 / Toronto ON / M6C 2K7 / Canada

IF DEATH COMES #3 / $2 or trade
5.5 x 8.5 – copied – 24 pgs
Todi, of the Halifax punk house with a zine reviewed above, did this one himself. It's travel stories, with him hitchhiking, sleeping outside, sitting in the park, etc. Nothing much happens that would grab a reader's attention, unless you've never heard of people doing these things before. The layout is very plain cut-and-paste. (JM)
6265 North St. / Halifax, NS / B3L 1P4 / Canada

INCIDENTAL AFTERTHOUGHT #4 / free
8.5 x 5.5 – copied – 16 pgs
Cut and paste punk zine with lots of rambling about stuff, "woowoo" as my friend James at work would say. Like, "She was hanging out with this dude and then woowoo, next thing you know she was pregnant and when the baby came out it had no arms and then woowoo, you know how it goes..." This issue has an interview with Chris Taylor of Page 99 (even though they broke up in like 2003...) And JR Hayes of Pig Destroyer. The kid who made this zine loves Void also, and I love Void, also, so woowoo. So it goes. (CH)
incidentalafterthought@yahoo.com

INCIDENTAL AFTERTHOUGHT #5 / free
8.5 x 5.5 – copied – 36 pgs
Oh yeah, I forgot to mention in the last review that this zine comes straight from the Philippines. This issue goes into extreme detail of a day spent getting ready for, going to, and being at a Vitamin X show. You know what happened last time I saw Vitamin X? It was outside and it was raining, and during the first song I got pushed in the mud and got completely muddied. It sucked. Bah. But anyway, this kid is totally stoked on lots of cool shit. And he is stoked to be doing his own thing and just figuring out what makes him happy. And that really comes through in his writing. He is overall just a really enthusiastic and positive kid who is into good tunes and good times. "I've learned that the more time you spend with yourself alone, the more you'll know what's really important to you." Keep it up, man! (CH)
incidentalafterthought@yahoo.com

THE INNER SWINE v.12 #2 / $2
5.5 x 8.5 – copied – 60 pgs
I guess you'll enjoy this publication if you aren't offended by the un-ironic use of words like whore and gay in fictitious settings, or if you take pleasure in clever and adroit control of language even if there is artifice lurking behind the curtain of self-deprecating, somewhat endlessly indulgent material. This guy is unapologetically pompous at times and can be really funny but overall I personally don't understand why he doesn't just get off his ass and start really trying to get published by *someone else* because that is obviously what he wants. He's like, really

proud of his ISBN number. WTF. (JB)
PO Box 3024 / Hoboken, NJ / 07030
www.innerswine.com

MOVE YOUR ASS #13 / free w/ postage
11 x 8 – printed – 42 pgs – Czech
Actually, this is really a great issue with some band articles, and lots of cool photos and graphics. Also included is an interesting article on tattoos. There are plenty of new record reviews and lots of really interesting ads. Finally, as usual this fanzine comes with a free 25-song CD sampler that includes the

bands Thalidomide, Shut Up and Dance, and plenty of unknown Czech bands. You will have to go online for address. (HH)
c/o Jan Kovar (MYA) / PO Box 18 / 463 31 Chrastava / Czech Republic
www.moveyourass@seznam.cz

NUESTRO LUGAR #1 / $?
8.5 x 11 – printed – 20 pgs – Spanish

So, I don't really speak Spanish, which makes giving this zine a truly fair shake impossible for me. I can tell you that the layouts are very clean, there are a bunch of ads for straight edge/vegan warrior type records, and there are interviews with a bunch of bands I am not at all familiar with (Knockout, Kayabud Sistema, WTD, etc.). There are also reviews; there seemed to be a lot of *hawd*-core and metalcore type stuff, from which I learned that "metalcore" in Spanish is "metalcore." I am really stoked on getting zines from Latin America, though I do wish the layout on this one was a bit less computer-generated. From what I could gather, the interviews and reviews are pretty standard though seemingly well done. (GN)
Tucumán 766-3 Piso-Of. 207 / C1049AAP Ciudad de Buenes Aires / Argentina

OX FANZINE #666 / $7
11 x 8 – printed – 140 pgs – German

Yep, nothing to say except there is lots and lots of punk rock in this comprehensive fanzine. Included in this issue are interviews with Tom Verlaine of Television and Rob Younger of Radio Birdman and The New Christs. That alone makes this a great issue. But there is plenty more, including pages and pages of new record reviews, lots of interesting band interviews, an article on punk films, and the usual comics, pictures, columns etc. Finally, this fanzine comes with it's usual free CD sampler, this one with 29 songs featuring Peter and The Test Tube Babies, Maggots, Born To Lose, and others. (HH)
PO Box 102225 / 42766 Haan / Germany
www.ox-fanzine.de

RAZORCAKE #33 / $4
8.5 x 11 – printed – 112 pgs

Razorcake to me seems to be getting better with time. There is more substance and also better taste in coverage from my grizzled point of view. This issue has Gorilla Angreb, Greg Palast (!!!), Chaos in Tejas review, Dan Sartain, Pink Razors, and the best concept for a band ever: The Mormons (white shirts ties and bicycle helmet uniforms, how did nobody think of this before??). Plus the obligatory reviews, but also cool comics, political stuff, etc. (NM)
PO Box 42129 / Los Angeles, CA / 90042
www.razorcake.org

REMAINS OF A CAVEMAN #4 / $2, £1, or trade
5.5 x 8.5 / 40 pgs / stapled

This issue of *Remains of a Caveman* collects stories and writing from the last two years. The most substantial piece here is Adam's 2004 trip to the US and Canada for travel and shows, but there are ruminations ranging everywhere from "Bus=Bad," "I Got Bitten on the Neck by a Spider at a Ghost Mice Gig," and "Buses=Bad," to "Hate Monkey Discourse," "Buses=Good," and "Stuff to Put in Liquid Nitrogen." Though at times the journal-entry-nature of this zine makes it a little irrelevant to anyone besides the author and people who know him, overall I enjoyed reading Adam's stories as he seems like an interesting dude with a good sense of humor. There are also some really great comics and bits of art here and there, though the zine itself has a lot of room for improvement in the layout department. (CS)
18 Brangwyn Drive / Patcham / Brighton / East Sussex / EN1 8XD / England
stecollective@hotmail.com

ROCK EXPLOSION #1 / $?
5.5 x 8.5 / 8 pgs / stapled

Rock Explosion manages to slag a remarkable number of Bay Area institutions for only eight pages. Kneejerk PC-baiting gets boring kinda quickly but this might otherwise hit the nail on the head more than a few times. (CS)
no address

SCAM #5-1/2 / $2
5.5 x 8.5 – copied – 32 pgs

Everyone loves donuts, right? But who would have guessed that the story of some donuts could carry so much history, crime and intrigue? This issue of *Scam* is devoted to the magical, dangerous, and delicious donut shop, Hunt's Donuts AKA Magic Donuts, known to many Mission District dwellers, and unfortunately no longer with us. A great piece of San Francisco history, it brings back fond memories of the days when donuts were more plentiful in the Mission, while touching on the politics, police oppression, and gentrification that affect the Bay Area. Great read. (MD)
Erick Lyle / PO Box 40272 / SF, CA 94140

SLUG & LETTUCE #87 / free
12 x 14 – printed – 20 pgs

This issue marks 19 years of publishing—congratulations Chris! One thing that definitely always comes up when people consider this zine is how ridiculously small the print is but it has to be that way for the zine to continue at all (more content per capita) and people just need to be patient and put on their glasses, or whatever. With the damn internet these days it is so important to have something you can hold in your hands and I'd rather squint at font size negatve 50 than a glowing screen any day. Columns this issue are stellar, there is a Requiem tour diary from Europe that discusses squatting, whether the "easy life" in Sweden is better than the culture of resistance that punx have here, and some funny stories, plus tons of reviews and photos. (JB)
PO Box 26632 / Richmond, VA 23261-6632

SORRY TREES #4 / $1 or trade
8.5 x 11 / 20 pgs / stapled

This zine features brief email interviews with DI and Bailout!, a piece about one of the authors' experience working at the Warped Tour '05, a healthy amount of record and zines reviews, and some miscellaneous info that looks like it was taken from the web. Definitely more of a click 'n' print aesthetic as opposed to a cut 'n' paste one. I'd check out another issue of *Sorry Trees*, but I'd like to see a bit more time spent on layout and editing perhaps. (CS)
13329 Winterstown Rd. / Felton, PA 17322
orkenbjorken@aol.com

$PARE CHANGE #18 / $2 US, "a little more for overseas," or trade
5.5 x 8.5 – copied – 20 pgs

I'm a fan of the Rev. Tom Foote's writing, and I buy *$pare Change* whenever I see it in my local zine shop. His style is very plain and heartfelt, and he gets to the point right away, for punk attention spans. My critique of the zine is that he uses a lot of blank space, double-spaced typing, etc., so that the whole thing reads in five minutes. I'd like to see an increased quantity of writing per issue. This issue talks about friendship and love—falling in so deep that you're destroyed when it ends, though he ends on a resilient note. This zine exemplifies the "two-dollars-is-the-new-dollar" price scale that increased paper and postage costs have forced upon punk publishers, which is why I'm critical of the relatively low word count. (JM)
PO Box 6023 / Chattanooga, TN 37401

THE SWING KID FANZINE #3 / Sliding scale
8 x 8.5 – copied – 104 pgs

Fuck!!!! This zine is thicker than my gramma's ankles, and once again I let myself get so behind on schedule that I have admittedly not given myself the proper amount of time to really sit down and read this in the

entirety that it deserves. This is seriously a novel of zines, man. All the way from Germany. Some highlights of this issue; an interview with members of I Adapt, from Iceland, an article on Turkish hardcore, Rock'n'Roll in Rhodesia, interview with Nicaraguan punk band Q69k...and a shitstorm of other articles and interviews too. Lots of pictures, unfortunately pretty grainy in quality, but read this zine if you want some punk history from all corners of the earth. (CH)
Gunter Meinhardt, Niederbarnimstr / 12 HH / 10247 / Berlin, Germany
kamillentee.waldesruh@web.de

TEMPEST #9 / $3
8.5 x 11 – printed – 48 pgs

The editor has devoted this issue to scripts he's (co-)written for his shadow puppet theater company over the past five years. There's a brief introduction to the form, followed by plays of increasing length. They have silly, ridiculous elements along with being politically minded. Included are some of the puppets themselves, so you can see what kind of material it takes to put on such a production. My apologies to the playwright, but if all theater ended tomorrow, I wouldn't notice, and my attention span was not sufficient to finish the longer pieces. I can imagine theater geeks being totally stoked on this, as I got the impression a lot of time and energy has been invested in both the writing and the materials. It's printed on quality, durable paper. (JM)
Roger / 37081 Tiller-Trall Hwy / Tiller, OR 97484

TOINEN VAIHTOEHTO #198 / trade
8 x 6 – printed – 32 pgs – Finnish

As usual, this is a totally cool punk rock fanzine from the Finnish scene. This issue mostly is about live gigs in Finland that include bands unheard of, or unknown in the USA. There are a few pages of new record reviews, lots of interesting photos, plenty of ads, and lots of contact addresses. As always this is definitely a fanzine for hooking up with the Finnish scene. (HH)
PO Box 1 / 65200 Vaasa / Finland
www.punkinfinland.net/tv

TOTAL DESTRUCTION #2 / $2
5.5 x 8.5 / 40 pgs / stapled

Pamphlet-esque zine dealing with radical politics from a vegan straight edge perspective. Includes among other things a fairly brief but also fairly interesting interview with Animal Liberation prisoner Peter Young, another interview with someone from the Icarus Project "radical mental health collective," and some reflective and editorial pieces by the author. *Total Destruction* is almost exclusively text and there is no explicit music content. Though I don't really see eye-to-eye with the person who wrote and compiled this zine, at least he seems to have an open mind and encourages communication. (CS)
Liberation Projects / 838 E. High St. #115 / Lexington, KY 40502
vegan.straightedge@yahoo.com

TRACK MARKS #1 / 3 stamps or trade
8.5 x 5 – copied – 36 pgs

Pretty much all punx like trains, or have liked trains at some point in their life. They're pretty cool, you know? You could hop one and go anywhere, plus there's all the added romance of our weird views on depression era America that make people want to ride the rails. Also, they go fast and are big, and make cool noises. I bet lots of us remember being a little girl and watching freight trains ride past something, and being really impressed by their awesomeness. However, just because trains are cool doesn't mean that every single person who breathes should write some really trite, boring poetry about trains and romance. Come on. I didn't want to read this in high school, and I don't want to read it now. It's very important to think about your writing, whether or not it's good, and if anybody actually wants to read more of this stuff. Please. (TW)
Love Bunni Press / 2622 Princeton Rd. / Cleveland Heights, OH 44118
www.lovebunnipress.com

TRUST #118 / $5
11 x 8 – printed – 68 pgs – German

First I want to give my congratulations to *Trust* for making the twenty-year mark. Who would ever have thought punk rock would live so long when it had been declared dead in the early eighties? In this anniversary issue are included interviews with Joe Lally, Kate Mosh, Spillsbury, *MRR*'s own Mykel Board, and Asiflash. There are also reviews of some of the best issues of *Trust*. Plus there are plenty of cool ads, and lots of new record reviews and the usual best gig listing in all of Germany. All this reviewer can write is way to go, it has been a pleasure reviewing one of the most dedicated and independent fanzines from the European scene. (HH)
Dolf Hermannstaedter / Postfach 110762 / 28087 Bremen / Germany
www.trust-zine.de

UNDERWORLD CRAWL #4 / $1
4 x 5 – printed – 40 pgs

Despite R. Lee's admitted desire to "make a diary sort of zine," *Underworld Crawl: Notes from Nowhere* doesn't suck. In fact, the writing is really great, and all the stories are interesting and compelling to read. This is the best sort of personal, nonfiction writing: interesting and not cliché. I'd definitely read it again. (TW)
R. Lee / PO Box 1421 / Oshkosh, WI 54903
rleemail@gmail.com

ZINETOPIA #1 / $2
8.5 x 5.5 – copied – 28 pgs.

This zine, which you are reading about in the zine you are holding right now, is about a lot of other zines which maybe you've read as well. That's weird huh? Like looking at yourself in a mirror when there's a mirror behind you and your image keeps repeating itself forever and forever into infinity. This is a good resource to find out about new good zines, because it's full of reviews and addresses of where you can obtain the zines. Also there is an article on the ethics of zine recycling as well as interesting interviews with Alex Wrekk of *Brainscan* zine and Microcosm distro, as well as Chris of *Slug and Lettuce*. (CH)
PO Box 816 / North Tazewell, VA / 24630 / piratesarah@gmail.com

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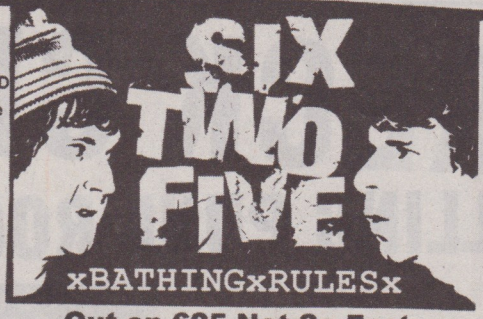
KUNGFU RICK - 2xCD
Entire collection. Insane grind/HC

BARBARIC THRASH CD COMP SERIES
NEW!Euro Thrash CD comp in digipak plus earlier Cali, & Japan editions!

HIT ME BACK - Debut LP
Socal ultra-posi thrash kings



Out on 625 Not-So-Fast:

GIANT HAYSTACKS/TIMF-Split EP
Angst punk meets MINUTEMEN!

LOVE SONGS - Debut CD
Ex-WHN/Your Mother goes Descendants!

OLDER TITLES FROM.....

HE WHO CORRUPTS, LIFES HALT, COMPLAIN, NO TIME LEFT, DOWN IN FLAMES, HIGHSCORE, HIT ME BACK, QUATTRO STAGIONE, FAR LEFT LIMIT, NINE CURVE, DISCARGA, OUT OF VOGUE, LIE, THE REAL ENEMY, FACE OF CHANGE, SECRET 7, LETS GROW, SHANK, DOMESTIK DOKTRIN, SOCIETY OF FRIENDS, HHH, GNAT SUCKERS, and IMMORTAL FATE.

.....ARE STILL AVAILABLE!!

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FOR WEEKLY UPDATES CHECK:

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STILL BLAZING NEW:

CRUCIAL SECTION - 2nd LP
Tokyo early-Ripcord style HC

HOSTILE TAKEOVER - EP
New Bay Area HC fast attack

L'AMICO DI MARTUCCI/OHUZARU-CD
Collection of dual fast Italian HC

QUILL/I DONT CARE split CD
Ultra-crazed Japanese blastcore

HATRED SURGE - Debut EP
One-person fastcore a la Despise You

ROSENBOMBS - Debut EP
Bay Area SIEGE style ultra-core

I SHOT CYRUS - Titanus LP/CD
Pulverizing Brazilian fast attack

IRON LUNG/SHANK split CD
Raging int'l power violence

BLOODY PHOENIX - Debut EP
Ex-Excruc Terror grinding blastcore

MACHINE GUN ROMANTICS - CD
Collect. of manic US powerviolence

LORDS OF LIGHT - EP
Wicked 3-man grind/fastcore, ex-SOF

CHARM - Shikami EP
Crazed Tokyo distort hyper thrash.

NO TIME LEFT - 10"LP
Raging Buffalo HC with ooks

THEY LIVE - LP
Scorching fast NY power violence

Mosh Circle Jerk Punks Comp LP
w/RAZORS EDGE, IDOL PUNCH, plus more

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2nd LP from Brazilian LARMers!

SECRET 7 - Debut EP
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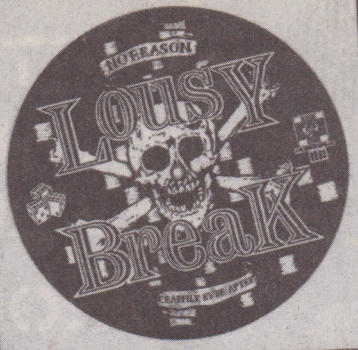

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